

# THE Catholic Citizen

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

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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.

## Democracy

By HELEN DOUGLAS IRVINE, M.A.

Don Luigi Sturzo, who writes an important chapter and the conclusion of "For Democracy,"<sup>1</sup> and is responsible for what the foreword calls its co-ordination, describes it as "twelve links in an unbroken chain." It has indeed a unity dependent on the quality which gives it value, the profound and reasoned faith of all its twelve authors in the ideal which they name democracy. This unity survives the differences in the connotation which the word democracy has for each of them. Miss Barbara Barclay Carter, in her lively and able introductory chapter, rejects Lord Acton's pregnant definition, "freedom of the governed to complain of wrongs and readiness in rulers to redress them," declaring that it applies not to democracy but to Liberalism. Writing the great word Liberal with a capital letter, she seems to use it in its modern, technical sense, as though she were distinguishing between the politics of Disraeli and Gladstone. She prefers to Lord Acton's definition Lincoln's slogan, with its common swing and vague, wide import: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." But why be at the trouble of stating that government is applicable to people? Lincoln shirked, as Acton did not, the difficult indication of how popular agency should be exercised and popular enjoyment of the benefits of government secured. Lord Acton's definition enriches that other well-known one, "government by consent." Miss Carter, who is rightly on her guard against excess of individualism, probably regards as inadequate Father Gosling's definition in the seventh chapter of this book: "It is the principle that free and intelligent beings should

freely guide themselves by the light of their intelligence to their chosen ends." I, as a democrat, am indebted to Father Gosling for stating this principle, yet find Monsieur Maurice Vaussart's amplification grateful to my political sense. A "social nation," says Monsieur Vaussart, using the adjective as synonymous with democratic, is "a nation wherein all social groups develop their own activities freely and harmoniously under the control of the State." Don Sturzo has yet another definition which ignores both groups smaller than a nation and individuals: "a political and social system based on the free and organic participation of the whole people for the common good."

There is further divergence among the authors when they particularise methods of government. The majority of them are whole-hearted parliamentarians. "Popular suffrage," Don Sturzo declares roundly, making it clear that he refers to parliamentary suffrage, "is the basis of democracy," and most of his collaborators share his opinion, laudably stating or implying that women have as much right to vote for parliament as men. Monsieur Vaussart in his chapter on "Democracy and the Nation," Professor Alfredo Mendizábal whose subject is the possibility of an international democracy, Monsieur Neurohr and Mr. Anthony Moore who deal with the totalitarian systems of the present day, and Monsieur Louis Terrenoire in his essay on corporatism, are however not preoccupied by parliamentarism. Monsieur Terrenoire's study of corporatism (guild socialism is surely a better English name) is particularly welcome to democrats who distrust the safeguard to liberty afforded by a popularly elected parliament. The right to vote for parliament is valuable in-

<sup>1</sup> *For Democracy*. Edited by the "People and Freedom Group." (Burns and Oates, 8s. 6d.)

deed, yet not more so than the right of free expression, interference with which is mainly modern, or, above all, than the habit and right of free association. It is the latter which is the fundamental, as well as the most ancient, constituent of democracy.

This fact is overlooked by Mr. Joseph Clayton in his historical essay. In less than eighteen pages Mr. Clayton makes a gallant attempt to relate the world-wide history of democracy in the Middle Ages and modern times. But why does he squander this exiguous space by writing of the English Parliament as though from the Middle Ages onwards it had been a democratic institution, even the democratic institution of the country? In fact, the democratic character of the British Parliament is, as other contributors to this book are aware, recent, a result of the fortunate adaptability of this assembly noticed by Don Sturzo. Democracy in the Middle Ages, in England as elsewhere, was exemplified richly not in national parliaments but in local institutions, in manorial courts, in parish, craft and merchant guilds, in religious houses (who all showed it as clearly as the Dominicans from Spain, yet did not, as Mr. Clayton implies, copy it from them) in the municipalities. If I too had space to ride off, like a few contributors to this book, on a hobby horse of mine, I have a Cockney nag whom I would match against Miss Carter's grave and beautiful Florentine steed; he is a mettlesome animal and has good paces. Of the historical chapters other than Mr. Clayton's, Mrs. Crawford's is distinguished by lucidity and good judgment.

It will be perceived that this book has the fine and vital quality proper to all democratic effort; it has variety as well as unity. Its unity is an essential one. Don Sturzo lays down that liberty is limited by law and individual responsibility and that "the rights of human personality are not only negative but also positive"; Monsieur Neurohr states that the law "protects the citizen against any arbitrary infringement of his personality by the state," insisting that a citizen has "fundamental rights, originally, fundamentally his"; and Signor Angelo Crespi notes, as the basic defect of the Greek city state, that it had "no room within its ethos for the notion of individual liberty," that democracy was not possible in Ancient Greece without "further depth of soul." This is the Christian conception of democracy which pervades this book, the conception of a government which will not invade what Monsieur Neurohr calls "the sacred precincts of the

human soul." It is what the Holy Father defends when, in his latest encyclical, he condemns a civil authority which is independent of God and of transcendent law; it is what Seeley had in mind when he defined political liberty simply as absence of over-government. Until this unhappy age of ours the sacred precincts of a man's soul were protected, at least a little, by the shortcomings and blunders of governments; there were loopholes, oversights, which let liberty in. But these are tragically eliminated by the "terrific efficiency" of a "magnificently organised demagoguery"—to use Monsieur Neurohr's phraseology once again. Some would argue that the indispensable protection is also afforded by forms of government other than democratic; for instance, the friends of Senhor Salazar claim that under his benevolent dictatorship it is enjoyed in Portugal. But, dependent as every dictatorship is on the will of one man, it cannot perform this protective function except fortuitously. Only in the democracy studied and advocated by the authors of this book is the soul of man secure.

### St. Joan's Alliance in Australia

*Hon. Secretary:* Miss M. M. Flynn, c/o Catholic Central Library, Collins Street, Melbourne.

On the 24th of October our Press Secretary, Miss Isabel Gartlan, was married to Mr. Daniel Condon by the Archbishop, with Nuptial Mass, at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The Alliance gave her an evening celebration at the Lyceum Club and presented her with a small gift. One of the bridesmaids was her sister Winifred (our member). We take this opportunity of congratulating our Press Secretary and wishing herself and her husband all happiness.

During the last week of October Bishops and Archbishops from the length and breadth of Australia assembled in Melbourne for the blessing of the spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Archbishop Simonds emphasised the part played by the early women pioneers of Australia, choosing as an example Mrs. Coffey who taught the first Catholic School in Victoria and supplied the box which served as the first altar.

On 15th of November we acted as hostesses at a Garden Party of "Welcome to the Grail" at their new home "Tay Creggan" Hawthorn. Representatives were sent to the Catholic Welfare Organisation, for the benefit of soldiers at home and abroad.

## Notes and Comments

Next January will be the Silver Jubilee of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN. This important event will be celebrated by a luncheon at Pinoli's on Monday, January 15th, presided over by Mrs. Laughton Mathews, M.B.E. Brief speeches will be made by Rev. Gerald Vann, O.P., Viscountess Rhondda, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss Helen Douglas Irvine, M.A., Ernest Oldmeadow, Esq., K.C.S.G., Miss Christine Spender, *Editor*.

We invite all our members and friends to come and make this an occasion of joy and thanksgiving.

Apply early for your tickets (3/6) from this office (55 Berners Street, Oxford Street. Tel. Museum 4181).

We welcome the fact that the Government has amended the Service Allowances for families and dependants. The scale for children is now 5s. for the first, 4s. for the second, 3s. for each further child. This and other improvements have been effected by unsparing criticism in Parliament and Press.

With reference to our note on the plan for unequal extra ration allowances for boys and girls, published in the last issue of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN, the Ministry of Food writes, "owing to the limited number of commodities which are being rationed, and the adequacy of supplies of alternative food stuffs, no arrangements are at present being made to provide supplementary rations for adolescent boys and girls." Mrs. Tate and Miss Rathbone protested in Parliament against the original scheme, and the Women's Organisations will continue to watch this matter.

From a splendid address on "Birth Control" given by Mrs. Shattock, M.B., B.S., to the United Hospitals Catholic Students Society of Aberdeen, on November 23rd, we take the following amusing remarks concerning Catholic Chaplains at British Universities. Mrs. Shattock is Vice President of the University of London United Hospitals Catholic Students' Society.

Catholics, sons and daughters of Aberdeen University are very fortunate in having a Catholic Chaplaincy, and fortunate indeed in being able to share equally in the privileges it confers on them. Not every British University is similarly blessed. Mine, which prides itself on being the oldest, has not yet extended this benefit to its women students, graduate or undergraduate. Feeling this as a great loss we petitioned ecclesiastical authority, but we were told that "local conditions" were unfavourable. We then approached what were obviously "local

conditions," the Catholic laity whose sons frequent this University and enjoy the privilege of having a Chaplain and a Chaplaincy and we were given some of the following reasons: (a) that women being good of their nature did not require a Chaplaincy; (b) that women being not good enough—that is intellectually inferior, would not appreciate the benefits of a Chaplaincy, and finally (c) that they were marriageable, and that parents must keep an eye on both material and spiritual aspects of their sons' careers.

We are very grateful to our hosts in Aberdeen that they have not considered us too good, too bad, or too marriageable and allowed us to participate in the spiritual benefits of Catholic Action under the guidance of their Chaplain.

Monsignor Paterson, Chaplain to the Aberdeen University, was present and proposed the vote of thanks to the speaker.

**Nationality.** The statement on British-born women married to subjects of a State at war with His Majesty, made in the House on November 23rd was highly unsatisfactory, as regards the right to reclaim British Nationality. We hope to deal more fully with this subject in our next issue.

By request of the Alliance Mass was offered for the repose of the soul of Mrs. Despard at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Joseph, Battersea, for many years her parish church. Here she devoted many years of her life to the poor of Nine Elms, where her memory will always be kept green.

The Alliance was represented at the Requiem Mass at St. Joseph's, Dublin and at the funeral, by Mrs. Tom Kettle.

We congratulate our member, Miss Mary Webber, on having been awarded the Rosa Morison post-graduate scholarship in English at the London University.

There will be a special Jubilee number of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN published on January 15th. This number will contain messages from many of our friends and there will be special articles. We think the Jubilee would be a good opportunity for every reader to endeavour to get a new subscriber. Show your friends the Jubilee number and use your powers of persuasion!

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

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## The Black Woman

The main question before people of good will in those countries in which there is contact with indigenous peoples is how far these may be benefited by a Missionary and "civilising" influence, how far it is best to leave well alone. There are those who contend that any outside influence, even that directed towards the good of the people involved, must necessarily be retrograde. This is of course to assume that everything is already very nearly perfect and that any modification must spell deterioration. Or it may be that to some, good is a comparative thing. They argue that after all we do not see life with the same mentality as tribal people, these are therefore quite happy suffering things which we could not abide, quite moral committing what appears to us wrong, and that our sin is to attempt to change their mentality and thus introduce the elements of discontent and guilt. Apart from the fact that the objective truth of this reasoning is open to doubt, it denies any ultimate good, a position impossible for a Christian to uphold. The open aim of the Missionary is that change of mentality which will put love of God and of the neighbour above any other consideration.

Soeur Marie Andrée du Sacré Coeur, of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (the "White Sisters") in her book "La Femme Noire"\* puts before us the garnerings of years of experience among the black women of French West Africa.

What difference does the Christian conception of marriage make to the black woman? That is to say free consent of the two parties and all that this implies of love and companionship once the contract has been confirmed. That it makes a profound difference to the whole status of black womankind emerges

\* *La Femme Noire en Afrique Occidentale.* By Soeur Marie Andrée du Sacré Coeur. Docteur en Droit. (Payot, 106 Boulevard St. Germain, Paris. 36 frs.)

pretty clearly from Soeur Marie Andrée's study. Without the system of marriages arranged by two families and payment of a price (the "dowry") to the family of the wife being necessarily slavery, this system has seemed to preclude all idea of companionship in marriage from the minds of the black people of French West Africa. Love and tender feeling has never entered into their conception of the marriage relationship, and as a result of this lacune the whole self-respect of the black woman has been undermined.

The woman regards her husband as her master (whether the marriage be polygamous or monogamous) whose habits and wishes must be studied and his whims indulged. But her real existence lies in the life of the senses to which she returns when, on visits to her mother, she seeks out once more her former lovers. It has never occurred to her that there might be a system under which she could marry the man of her choice. No a husband is a husband, a lover is a lover. A husband is one who must be humoured but at the same time deceived. A lover is one with whom one really delights to be. Probably owing to the ephemeral nature of the latter relationship, there seems to be very little tenderness mixed up with it. It is more a kind of passionate grabbing, full of desire and greed. The husband, on the other side of the picture, is rather afraid his wife may leave him and go back to her family on some flimsy pretext, and he considers the only way to forestall this is to make his authority felt—hence his distant airs of ownership. Of his fellow men he will make companions, of his womenkind never—only his mother retains a spark of his affection and respect.

When consent in marriage has been attained by two native Christians, then it is that family life really begins. Almost unconsciously husband and wife begin to share one

## MRS. DESPARD

another's interests and even their work. A husband will confide his household to his wife when going on a journey, a thing unknown among his pagan companions. Fear departs and all that is best in the native character comes to the surface. It goes without saying that the children benefit from the mutual enlightenment of the parents. Since love and tenderness as distinct from passion have become the very basis of life, to "little ones" is revealed that love of God and the neighbour which is Christianity.

This very important point is only one that emerges after careful study of Soeur Marie Andrée's book. Her main contention is a plea that over-conscientious respect of native custom shall not drag back into barbarism those natives with whom custom has evolved. Native custom is not static, she contends, and it is not just that the great Colonial Powers who govern indigenous peoples should, through fear and prejudice, forget the laws of common humanity. How many human lives have already been sacrificed to this Moloch, respect of native custom? Most Missionaries could give their quota of cases. Law, says Soeur Marie Andrée is not everything but it is a great deal and wise decrees coupled with enlightened circulars to those enforcing them have an educative influence which is not to be despised. We remember with gratitude the recent decree governing native marriages in Africa, issued by the French Government, and which owed much to the efforts of Soeur Marie Andrée, and we can only hope that other Governments will soon follow this good example.

CHRISTINE SPENDER.

### MRS DESPARD--(Continued).

fine work you have done and are still doing. I am sure—and I delight to think it—that you, so many of whom belong to the younger generation, will continue to carry St. Joan's banner and to fight, with her brave, bright spirit stimulating you against injustice and oppression." In another message to our Alliance in 1928 she wrote, "I sometimes think that Catholic women, with their peculiar veneration for womanhood, as represented by her whom we love and revere as the World Mother, must be specially glad over the triumph of our Cause. May courage and strength be given to them to use for compassion, help and service the power which has fallen into their hands."

H. D. I.

Mrs. Despard was born nearly a hundred years ago, in 1844 when a young Queen Victoria reigned in the England of squirearchy and rising industrialism and when three other young women were scribbling poems and novels in Haworth Parsonage. She was born in England but was Irish by descent—her sailor father was a French of county Roscommon—and in her lifelong rebellion against oppression, her gallantry, her love of battle and her pacifist convictions, she was a daughter of the Ireland that has bred martyrs and soldiers and dreamers rather than of the England in which much clothed women were either conventional and guarded or broke their hearts. "I love these young women with their short skirts and light stockings," she said not long before she died, remembering the petticoats and crinolines, the screens and shams and barriers which had encumbered her youth. She made short work of them, she who drew her earliest political inspiration from Shelley and whose favourite character in fiction was Milton's Satan.

She was very honourably and prominently associated with the great movements for liberty of her lifetime, especially with those for Irish freedom and for women's suffrage. As a suffragette she was imprisoned four times, and because she considered the Women's Social and Political Union to be too autocratically organized, she founded the Women's Freedom League. Always tyranny and cruelty kindled this "white flame," as Madam Maud Gonne McBride has aptly called her friend. Her compassion was as strong and deep as her love of freedom. For twenty years she conducted at Nine Elms a clinic which will long be affectionately remembered, and she visited Belfast, at some risk, during the Anti-Catholic pogrom of 1922, used her influence, without respect of persons, towards restoring justice and charity, and afterwards harboured refugees from Belfast in her home in Dublin, giving especial care to the children.

Mrs. Despard was received into the Church soon after her husband's death in 1890 and was an early member of St. Joan's. "Dear friends and fellow-workers of the St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance," she wrote after she had attended the Mass in Westminster Cathedral which commemorated the suffrage victory of 1928, "I send you more thanks than I can express for the lovely flowers and the exquisite image of our Saint which will find a place at home on the table beside my bed. I know what

(Continued in previous column)

## International Notes

**Egypt.** *L'Egyptienne* welcomes the appointment of Chazli Pacha as Minister for Social Questions, for his administration has always tended to help social reform in Egypt. As Mudir of Behara, he was responsible for closing the *maisons tolérées* in that province. Among several social reforms which he is now supporting, and which will be realised, are the limitation of polygamy to special cases, the restriction of a man's right to repudiate his paternity, and the suppression of official prostitution, coupled with the imposition of severe penalties on procuring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mademoiselle Aicha Abdel Rahuman, well known for her articles advocating reform of the conditions suffered by the fellah, has been appointed to a post in Chazli Pacha's ministry, in defiance of the prejudice against women in the Civil Service which still exists in Egypt.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Bulletin* of the International Council of Women reproduces from *The Independent Woman* an article by Dr. Valeria Parker which protests vigorously against the present attack in the United States on woman's right to earn. Section 213A of the Federal Economy Act turned out of the Federal Civil Service married women whose husbands were employed in it; some twenty states have inflicted the same loss on their local civil services; and some private enterprises are similarly excluding women from their staffs. Dr. Parker shows that such injustice, far from protecting the family, hinders marriage and therefore encourages illicit unions and promiscuity.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Board of Education in **Sweden** has ruled that boys as well as girls shall benefit by the courses of domestic training included in the curricula of the municipal elementary schools.—*Bulletin of the I.C.W.*

\* \* \* \* \*

In **Belgium** Madame Gabrielle d'Ieteren, a distinguished feminist and social worker, is the first woman to be a Parliamentary Secretary. She has been appointed to the staff of Monsieur Henri de Man, Socialist Minister, without portfolio, in the present coalition government.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Finland.** The Finnish Women's Organisation "Lotte Svärd," comprises more than 100,000 members from all classes who take a pledge to protect religion, home and fatherland. The patron of this patriotic association, Lotte Svärd, was a soldier's

(Continued in next column)

## Book Review

**The Passing of the Aborigines.** By Daisy Bates, C.B.E. (Murray, 10s. 6d.)

When war is taking its toll, not only of lives but of energies and interests, it is salutary to be reminded that in providing fresh problems it does not solve those already existing. In the book under notice Mrs. Bates describes the passing of the last of the paleolithic peoples at the touch of the civilisation we are fighting to preserve, and her work, carried out with unexampled fortitude was "merely" to "ease their passing." That she succeeded so far is her greatest reward.

The Aboriginal woman is betrothed at birth, lent and bartered at the whim of the husband, excluded from all the ceremonies of the group: her place in the "camp ceremony is lower than that of the dogs." When the tabus of the totem groups were in force she had some protection but she has suffered from the promiscuity resulting from the breakdown of such rules as there were and has gained little from the "new freedom."

This book should be of use to Governors in its wise insistence on "thinking with the black man's mind," and the author's success in dealing with the wild cannibals of the bush should do something to bring about a wiser method of "protecting" the native than mere "efficiency" provides.

It is good to know that our missionaries, Trappists and Benedictines, feel as Daisy Bates does, that the aborigines' "very primitiveness calls for our highest." The book is a most opportune lesson in values, and in that "other kind of warfare" to which Governments are bidden to turn their hearts. P. C.

### HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

We thank all our members for their generous response to our appeal for the Christmas Sale held in this Office, December 4th. Gifts in cash and kind have poured in and many members and friends have visited the Office to buy, even on occasion braving the black-out! Helpers too have abounded and nobly spent hours "on duty." Up to date the funds have benefited by £39 5s. od. We feel this has been an occasion of bringing us all together as well as of gaining money. We add a special word of thanks to our Sales Secretary, Mrs. Talbot.

(Continued from previous column)

wife who, during the wars of 1788-90, joined her husband on the battlefield as a canteen worker, accompanying the troops and sharing their hardships. She continued this work for many years after her husband had been killed and her name received honourable mention in the campaign of 1809, one of numerous campaigns of Finland against Russia.—*International Women's News.*

## CORRESPONDENCE

Pinner.  
9/11/39.

Dear Editor.

May I suggest that St. Joan's Alliance put forward the idea that when the principles, upon which peace will be made and a new world created, are written down the words "and women" are always used with the words "men"; (perhaps a chivalrous new world order could sometimes put us first).

By most thinkers the word "man" is, of course, inclusive of woman, but there are groups who would insist for years to come that the word "men" meant males only.

It would be good if all women's organisations insisted on this safeguard. It would open the way to many and far-reaching reforms, and is so simple a thing to do.

Yours sincerely,  
C. M. CHEKE.

[At the Peace Conference in 1919 representatives from the Women's Organisations interviewed President Wilson, M. Clemenceau and other leading statesmen. The women were heard before some of the Commissions set up by the Peace Conference and were instrumental in getting the principle of equality inserted in the Covenant of the League of Nations—i.e., Article VII: "All positions under or in connection with the League, including the Secretariat, shall be open equally to men and women." The International Labour Office also laid down as one of its guiding principles "that men and women shall receive equal remuneration for work of equal value."—Ed.]

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