

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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15th JUNE, 1936.

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.

Marriage and the Family in Mission Countries*

BY CHRISTINE SPENDER

The 12th Week of Missiology held in Louvain in August 1934 drew some very interesting papers from Missionary priests and nuns, on marriage and the family in Mission countries. Besides papers written from personal experience which deal chiefly with India, China and parts of Africa, notably the Belgian Congo, there were read expositions clarifying such things as the Catholic doctrine of Marriage, the Buddhist doctrine of the Family, etc. These papers are all contained, together with a summary of the discussions which took place, in the account of the Mission Week under review. The Week was held under the presidency of the Rev. Father Beaufrays, O.F.M., former apostolic prefect of Rhodes Island. Father Ulrix of the White Fathers acted as Vice-President and Father Pierre Charles, S.J., professor of Missiology at the Gregorian University, and member of the International Colonial Institute, acted as secretary. The Missiology Weeks held yearly in Louvain are intended for "all missionaries without distinction of race, of language or of country."

It is proposed in this article to pass under review only those papers dealing with Africa leaving the other papers for a further article. Nevertheless a reference to St. Joan's Alliance which occurs in the discussion printed at the end of the paper on "The Family and Mohamedan Law" read by Father Ulrix of the White Fathers, cannot be passed over. Père Charles, S.J., says here: "We can influence the feminist movement in Missionary countries by the feminist organisations of our Catholic countries. . . All social problems concerning women are discussed with much common sense by these or-

ganisations. It suffices to mention *Le Féminisme Chrétien* of Belgium organised by Mlle Louis Van den Plas and the admirable St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance of England with its review, the *Catholic Citizen*."

Reading the papers on Africa one is aware that social conditions in that continent are changing very rapidly. As these papers were written two years ago, any statements made in this article as to prevailing customs, etc., are open to correction. Nevertheless the impression gained is that there will be room for improvement in the position of the woman in many parts of Africa for a long time to come.

To take first the paper on the Congolese woman and her Christian development read by Mère Thérèse, Mother General of the Daughters of the Cross. She says that she has heard certain Congolese women say: "Our father considers us as 'shops' and tries to gain as much profit as possible from us. He gives us in marriage, not to the best man but to whoever offers the highest 'dowry.'" Mother Teresa says that the stability of the (native) marriage union is only guaranteed by payment of the bride-price, yet there are a thousand petty reasons considered sufficient for the breaking of the union. She describes a lesson on the Moral Law given to thirty little girl pupils, the subject being "My Father and Mother." "Our father?" they said, "He works but keeps the money for himself, he does what he likes with it. Our mother doesn't know what he earns. He can misbehave himself, Mama must not say a word or she will be beaten. But if she does the same thing only *once* she will never be forgiven. How hard mother works every day—all for us! Yet when we marry the bride-price will be all for 'Baba.'" On the other hand the little daughters never think of

* *Marriage et Famille aux Missions*. Compte Rendu de la Douzième Semaine de Missiologie de Louvain. 1934. (Editions du Museum Lessianum.)

sparing their mother. They are "spoilt" by her because she wishes them to keep their looks in order that the "dowry" paid for them shall be high. The father also shows his daughters consideration—the consideration he would show to a valuable animal for which he would get paid less if it was delivered in bad condition. Everything done for the girl will be thrown in her face later if she does not do exactly as "Baba" wishes in the way of marriage. And so to avoid reproaches, blows and violence, the girl nearly always accepts the man pressed on her (i.e. he who pays the highest "dowry"). It is the aim of the good Sisters of the Cross to uproot the slave spirit in their little black pupils, so that true Christian convictions shall guide them, not the "supreme" will of father or husband. The Sisters give them advice: "See, children, your father has not any right to give you to a husband whom you don't love. You must say 'I want him' or 'I don't want him.' If not you are the miserable slaves of your father. Don't fear his blows or his menaces. Tell him 'Slavery is abolished; you have not the right to treat me as a slave any more, nor to sell me like an animal, a mere goat.'" Mother Teresa describes how the Rev. Father Superior said one day: "If you go on acting as your mothers before you, I won't greet you by name; I shall say 'Good-morning, Slave.'" This opened their eyes more than anything.

Slavery may be abolished, yet Mother Teresa quotes some heart-rending cases of coercion among these Congolese girls. One, Dahlia, was engaged to a police officer in the service of the State. She refused the pagan to whom she had been sold. The latter carried the affair to the tribunal and gained his case and since he refused repayment of the bride-price in her stead, Dahlia was obliged to "marry" him.

There is unfortunately not space to dwell any further on the good work accomplished by the Daughters of the Cross. They run girls' schools, schools for fiancées, schools for half-caste girls. Moreover they make a point of keeping in touch with the girls when they are married and this is achieved to a great extent by the welfare clinic run for the benefit of mothers and babies. They find that the education of the children has a considerable effect on the mothers.

The discussion printed at the end of Mother Teresa's paper revolves round the question of the marriage of half-castes brought up in the Mission. Mother Teresa says that with these half-castes "Christian education of husband and wife takes the place of the 'dowry' in native

custom." (Congolese law allows native marriage without "dowry.") In his paper on "Ways of stabilising Marriages of Converts living among Pagans," Father Van Cleemput, C.S.S.R. (Congo) says that Missionaries "can seek a safeguard of the stability of Christian marriage in this custom (dowry)." He remarks that he has met one or two *Christian* (italics ours) girls protesting against the money to be paid for them and that one day he heard a girl say out right that she did not wish her body to be bought. But for the most part even though the marriage be contracted in Church and before a priest, the natives would be ashamed to contract it without payment of "dowry." They would consider the union illegal—mere concubinage. One cannot help feeling that this is a point of view unworthy of Christian converts and one hopes that with increased Christian education and the discouragement of the Missionaries, the custom of "dowry" or bride-price will gradually die out. Father Van Cleemput knows of "no Missionary trying to suppress the 'dowry' or dreaming of doing so." "Circumstances would not yet permit this," he says. Despite his assumption that the "dowry" offers a means of stabilising Christian marriage, Father Van Cleemput says there is no question of indissolubility in native marriage, nor is it ever intended. Divorce for the flimsiest of motives is of frequent occurrence in the Congo. In the discussion printed on page 213, Monseigneur Van Uytven, Vicar Apostolic of Buta, Belgian Congo, suggests that abuses of the "dowry" system should be met by insisting that the bride-price shall be paid to the wife herself, thus enabling her to install herself comfortably and buy herself some furniture and household equipment "which shall be her own property."

The abuse of polygamy exists in the Congo, for there as elsewhere in Africa, the woman is considered an economic asset on account of her services in field and hut, though her own well-being is never considered. The paper dealing with polygamy which was read by Father Keller of the Holy Ghost Fathers, is concerned with the Cameroons. The *Catholic Citizen* has often dealt with the Cameroons before so that there is no need to repeat the general outline which Father Keller gives concerning the position of women there (marriage customs, inheritance of widows, etc.). As concerns polygamy Father Keller gives disturbing details. He says: "Polygamy is still a powerful factor in favour of immorality. It is evident that it cannot spiri-

(Continued on page 55)

Notes and Comments

On May 30th, the anniversary of the burning of St. Joan, our member, the Rev. J. Dobbeleers, kindly offered Mass for St. Joan's Alliance. In accordance with our custom, a wreath tied in our colours was placed on the Shrine of St. Joan in Westminster Cathedral.

In Paris on St. Joan's Day, a bouquet of white flowers tied with blue ribbon was laid at the foot of St. Joan's Statue in the rue de Rivoli, by l'Alliance Ste. Jeanne d'Arc.

We rejoice to see in the list of the new French Cabinet the names of three women: Mme. Joliot-Curie as Under Secretary for Scientific Research; Mlle. Suzanne Lacore as Under Secretary for Child Welfare and Mme. Brunschvicg as Under Secretary for National Education.

In congratulating these three distinguished women on their appointments, we congratulate also France who for the first time will have the direct assistance of women in her counsels of state. The name of Mme. Joliot-Curie is world-known, not only on account of her famous parents, but also from her own scientific work which last year gained her the Nobel Prize.

Feminists may be permitted to express particular pleasure at the inclusion of Madame Brunschvicg, the distinguished President of L'Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes.

After this recognition of their ability it cannot be long before the women of France gain the vote. Surely it is too great an anachronism that women should be working for a Government whose members they have no right to elect.

The following Resolution has been sent to the Treasury:

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance views with apprehension the new scheme for the reorganisation of Clerical work within the Civil Service; it holds that there should be no differentiation between the employment of men and women within the Civil Service and has always objected to reservations of work on sex grounds alone. The Alliance would, therefore, urge the Treasury not to extend the policy of reservation on sex grounds by increasing the number of posts in the Clerical Departments to be reserved to women only.

It would be useful if members would write to their M.P.s on the lines of the above resolution, and it might also be pointed out that the extension of low paid women's labour in the Service will have repercussions on the employment of men and will mean in the long run a reduced

field for the recruitment of boys, and the employment of men.

Both the Meeting of the Bank Officers Guild held recently in London and the Conference of the National Association of Local Government Officers at Aberdeen adopted resolutions declaring belief in equality of opportunity for men and women, the latter organisation also declaring its belief in equal pay for equal work. The annual conference of the Amalgamated Engineering Union held recently at Morecambe, adopted a resolution in favour of equal pay.

The fact that certain restaurants continue to have definite rules not to serve women unaccompanied by men has again come to light. A member of our Alliance, a young married woman home from South Africa, and a friend were refused refreshment in the Lounge of the Picadilly Hotel on the grounds that they had no male escort. A protest addressed to the Hotel elicited the reply that this indeed was the rule of the management and we feel sure that it is only right that our members should be acquainted with the fact. Our readers will remember that the Criterion Restaurant which previously followed the same policy has now no special regulations discriminating against women though of course they reserve to themselves the right to approach anyone, of either sex, "should they be conducting themselves in a manner likely to cause annoyance to other patrons." We think if the management of the Picadilly Hotel followed a similar policy they would suffer no inconvenience and at the same time would not have to insult women customers.

The Home Office has announced that by express order of the King the statutes of the Royal Victorian Order will be altered to permit the admission of women to the Order in all its classes as follows: G.C.V.O.; D.C.V.O.; C.V.O.; M.R.O.; M.V.O. Women will take the title Dame instead of Knight.

Representatives of St. Joan's Alliance were present at the Garden Party given by Mrs. Richard Seligman and Mrs. Corbett Ashby (President of the International Alliance of Women) to meet His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia and H.R.H. Princess Yashimabet in recognition of the encouragement they have given to the education and training of the women and girls of Ethiopia.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

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

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

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MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, *Hon. Editor.*

Women in Holland

On June 4th, St. Joan's Alliance had the privilege of entertaining Dr. van der Pijl and her sister at a dinner at the Minerva Club and of hearing her account of the position of women in Holland.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews, presiding, said she had particular pleasure in welcoming Dr. van der Pijl, who was a prominent worker in the feminist movement, both national and international; the Alliance could well be proud to number such distinguished Dutch women as Dr. van der Pijl and Mme. Mulder among its members.

Some years back Dr. van der Pijl, arriving in London saw St. Joan's Alliance banner carried in an Equal Franchise procession, and without any ado took her place behind it. The friendship thus begun had been renewed in 1929 at the Berlin Congress of the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance.

Dr. van der Pijl began by alluding to the readiness with which the Alliance offered a helping hand in any need thus putting into practice the true principles which should inspire every league of women.

In Holland the status of women was indisputably worse than it was a few years ago, mainly through the economic crisis many things had been lost that pioneers had struggled for and obtained.

Women had full suffrage rights, a few had obtained important administrative posts, but no woman had yet been in the Cabinet. They are not eligible for the judicature. They have the same property, testamentary and inheritance rights as men, but a married woman is not free to administer her own property or, save in certain cases, make contracts or bring an action without her husband's consent. She must adopt the domicile and nationality of her husband.

Women teachers and women civil servants must retire on marriage. Girls have the same educational facilities as boys, though all mixed schools and some girls' schools are under headmasters. In Banks only a few women reach the higher positions, but in Amsterdam a large Bank has a special department for women clients staffed entirely by women.

In industry, on the whole, labour legislation gives equal protection to men and women but there are notable exceptions whereby women's work is restricted. In agriculture there are certain restrictions on women's work, women receive about two thirds the pay of the men.

The unemployment problem has led to the dismissal of many women workers in offices and factories and there is a general idea that every woman can find domestic work irrespective of capacity or special talents for other work. One good result is that the younger women are realising the value of women's organisations and are forming younger workers' committees to defend their position.

Here Dr. van der Pijl digressed and spoke of the Silent Peace Processions organised by the women of Holland. In 1934, 2,000 women took part, in 1935, 80,000; this year, 120,000, while the speeches that followed were broadcast to the whole country.

The women of Holland would persevere in their efforts to collaborate with the international movement working for equal status and opportunities between men and women.

Mrs. Crawford, who had just come back from a visit to Spain, gave a few of her impressions of the country, where what had struck her most was the seclusion in which so many of the women still remained. A vote of thanks to both speakers was moved by Miss Terry and seconded by Miss Barclay Carter.

B. B. C.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY IN MISSION COUNTRIES—(Continued from page 52)

tualise the husband nor yet the 'wives' . . . In the Bakoko tribe enforced bachelors form forty per cent of the adult men and the proportion is the same wherever polygamy obtains. . . . The polygamist offers his 'wives' at a monetary consideration to soldiers or other employees *de passage*; he offers them to his numerous friends or relations who are visiting him; he puts them at the disposal of bachelors who in return will work on his land and give him children. Such and such a polygamist, possessing 200 wives, leaves them at liberty to go and come provided they bring him regularly a fixed sum. Finally the women give themselves without scruple to any stranger. In short polygamy is prostitution dignified into a social system."

Though polygamy on the large scale described above is fortunately rare, it is obvious that one polygamist of this kind can do infinite harm in a given district. Even polygamy on a small scale means a high percentage of enforced bachelors. "Moreover polygamy causes the woman to lose all human dignity," says Father Keller.

Father Keller says that the Administration (French Cameroons) has, till just lately, done nothing but obstruct any action taken against polygamy. The Colonial tribunal has been obliged to force a Christian girl promised against her will to a polygamist to follow her buyer, in spite of the protests of her conscience. However, Father Keller hopes great things from the decree recently promulgated by M. Bonnacarrère, Governor of the French Cameroons. Details of this decree have from time to time appeared in the *Catholic Citizen*.

The Missionaries brought to Africa the ideal of dedicated virginity. As a matter of fact, before their coming, celibacy among women was practically unknown. Among the papers under review is one presented by a White Sister (Sister Juliana) on "The Christian Ideal of Virginity and African Society." She deals with the Missions of the Great Lakes and East Africa where the White Sisters and White Fathers work. Here, she says, the idea that women are only made for marriage is widespread. Celibacy is a reproach and a folly—"and are we now to consult our young girls as to whether they wish to be married or not?" ask the "elders." Sister Juliana describes the struggles with her family that many a young aspirant has to undergo before she arrives at a trial of her vocation. The more the milieu is impregnated with Christianity, the easier it is for these noble girls, and Sister Juliana gives some touching descriptions of

Christian fathers and mothers bringing their daughters to the Mission to be Sisters. For most of them the heroism and sacrifice which go to the attainment of their ideal is immense, for apart from the possible opposition of their families, the life is a complete reversal of all they have ever known and they are so used to acting on impulse that they find constancy extremely difficult. But one feels that those who win through must be more than compensated for suffering and sacrifice by the realisation of their own dignity as human beings. She, who has never been considered as of any worth except in relation to someone else, now gives herself of *her own free-will* to God. To know that there exist consecrated virgins of their own race must be a revelation to many a native—man or woman.

In a discussion printed on page 135 Père Charles, S.J., says (referring to the bride-price): "In order to cause a social custom resulting from an economic situation to disappear, is a purely spiritual means sufficient? Should not the social organisation itself be modified in order to end these things efficaciously?"

St. Joan's Alliance is of the humble opinion that when the social organisation degrades a human being it *should* be modified and that secular means, such as change of law and education, can be successfully employed to assist this end. It is this kind of assistance where African women are concerned, for which our Alliance can most usefully work. The cry of a Congolese woman, described in Mother Teresa's paper, must ring in our ears till we have achieved our aim: "My son, you are happy to be a boy and not a girl! *Notre vie à nous, femmes noires, n'est pas belle.*"



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International Notes

We regret to record the death, at the age of 97, of the beloved Marianne Hainisch, mother of the first president of the new **Austrian State**. From 1871 Frau Hainisch worked for women's entry into the professions and organised Austrian women in their fight for equal rights and equal citizenship. It is largely owing to her that all educational facilities and schools for their professional training were made available to Austrian girls and women and that equality between men and women was written into the Austrian constitution. May she rest in peace.

* * * *

A recent issue of *The Catholic Women's Review* (Australia) contains a most interesting article by one of our U.S.A. members, Georgina McEntee. She recalls some of the pioneer Catholic philanthropists of the **United States** who deserve to be better known, among them several women. There was Madame Bayer of Brooklyn, "Angel of the Sailors," who was the first to work for Catholic sailors and to enlist help and sympathy on their behalf and who may be considered as a forerunner of the "Apostolatus Maris" movement. Her great triumph was the appointment of the first Catholic chaplain in the United States navy. She was of Belgian extraction and lived from 1814—1892. Then there was Margaret Haughey "mother of orphans," of Irish extraction and born in the early part of last century. She came from the ranks of the very poor but combined business (a dairy and afterwards a bakery) with charity so successfully that she enabled orphan asylums and a training school for girls to thrive in New Orleans. Throughout her life she ministered to the needy and was friend to the sick and the dying, more especially during a terrible epidemic of yellow fever. Last, Miss McEntee describes the work of the famous Mother Katherine Drexel who founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament at Philadelphia in 1889. The Sisters work entirely for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the black and red races of America. Out of her life interest in the Drexel millions, Mother Drexel largely supports a university, schools, churches, missions, many of them founded at her instigation, and all existing for the use of the negroes and the red Indians. Hers is the only Order entirely dedicated to the help of these races.

May we congratulate Miss McEntee on her fascinating article?
S. A. B.

Reviews

A Courtesan of Paradise. By Margaret Trouncer. (Faber & Faber, 15s.)

The book, with this rather startling title, is a biography of Louise, Duchesse de la Vallière, who in her youth was appointed a lady-in-waiting to Madame Henriette, sister of Charles the Second, a post which brought her into contact with Louis XIV with whom she fell deeply in love. The King was engaged at the time in an affair with Madame, which caused a scandal. It was merely as a strategic move to divert attention from it that he, at the suggestion of Madame, made sham love to her lady-in-waiting. Mrs. Trouncer tells us, in one of those passages of imaginative reconstruction with which her biography abounds, that "as the King looked into those pure eyes, brimming with so true a love, he felt ashamed of himself, and in turn most unexpectedly lost his heart to her." The sequel, as everyone knows, is that she became his mistress, a faithful and devoted one, bore him four children, suffered years of torture from his infidelity, and then entered the Carmelite Order, embracing the austerities and mortifications of her new life with the joyful ardour of a saint. Mrs. Trouncer tells this remarkable story with great ability. Her imaginative reconstructions of the various episodes in it, whether in the world or in the cloister, are based on a solid foundation of ascertained facts. Her claim that she has "searched like a ferret, and weighed like a judge" the evidence of Louise's contemporaries, and taken into account the characters of the witnesses, is substantiated at every turn. She has not romanticized or idealized either Louise or the times in which she lived. The spirit in which she has approached her task is indicated by the quotation from de Lezeau on the first page: "Mère Madeleine was of the opinion that one should not veil the weaknesses, faults and imperfections of the saints, in order not to discourage their imitators when they undergo like miseries." Nor should the historian veil the filth, corruption and iniquity of the court of Louis XIV. This is a well-constructed, intelligent and informative biography, containing many admirable portraits of historical personages, but perhaps its greatest merit is that it shows clearly that man's heart is unquiet until it rests in God.

CHRISTOPHER ST. JOHN.

The report of the British Commonwealth League Conference will appear next month.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT

We trust that the Government will shortly amend the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, so that "common prostitutes" and "women of known immoral character" shall not be excluded from the sections dealing with procuration, in order that third party procuration of all women shall be a punishable offence.

As was pointed out at a Public Meeting convened by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene to demand this reform, the inquiries following the recent murder of Max Kassel (alias Emil Allard) and the subsequent press reports of his alleged activities in the sale of drugs and the traffic in women, show that London is being used by foreign traffickers, this being corroborated by a number of prosecutions heard in the Central Criminal Court and Police Courts since 1933. Certain of these prosecutions made it clear that a group of men were engaged in settling French women in expensive London flats after a marriage with English unemployed men—which proves the urgent necessity not only for the deletion of certain clauses in the aforesaid Act, but also for changing the existing nationality laws which automatically confer full British Nationality on undesirable alien women who marry British men. This degradation of British Nationality can only be effectively prevented by placing women in the same position as men in regard to changing or retaining their nationality.

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT BRANCH

Hon. Secretary: Miss Bowden,
22 Fern Grove, Liverpool, 8.

The last indoor meeting of the season was held on May 25th at 22 Fern Grove. Miss Johnson, a member of the Liverpool Committee, made her maiden speech entitled "Women's Progress." Notable women from early times to the present were given their meed of praise for their share in the successful march of women towards right and justice. We hope to have an outdoor meeting in the summer.

HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

I am writing this note near to St. Joan's Feast Day. If you have not remembered the Alliance dues before this will you please send either the minimum subscription or much better than that your maximum, so that I may tell you in next month's issue of the *Catholic Citizen* how much better than any half year in all the twenty-five the work is being done. This is only possible if you do your share. Many and grateful thanks to those who have sent Jubilee gifts of twenty-five pounds—shillings—pence, but we should like a great many more.

This month the "Barrow" has made its reappearance. Any saleable clothes, etc., will be welcomed.
C. J. GARRARD.

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On Saturday, June 27th, there will be a **Ramble** through Kenwood and tea at Highgate by kind invitation of Miss Gadsby. Meet at 2-45 at Hampstead Tube Station. Please apply for tickets is. at the Office, as soon as possible.

THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL GUILD

will be held in Oxford from August 1st to 8th. The School is open to members of the Guild and non-members alike. Accommodation is provided in Ruskin College, the Catholic Workers' College and in lodgings. August 2—Pontifical High Mass. Sermon by the Rev. F. J. Grimshaw, D.D., Annual Meeting of the Guild, the President, His Lordship the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, in the chair.

DURING THE WEEK—LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS Rev. Lewis Watt, S.J., B.Sc. (Econ.), "Introduction to the Study of the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*." M. Andre D. Toledano,—"Current International Affairs: Dictatorships, Communism, Modern Democracies, International Co-operation." Rev. J. E. Coffey, S.J., on "Colonies and Mandates." Studies in Local Government—Dr. L. D. Fairfield, M.D., D.P.H., on "Public Health." Councillor W. F. Smith, on "The County Borough." Councillor Martin Brennan, J.P., on "Rural Authorities." Mr. G. Garrigan, on "the Future of Local Government." Mr. T. Leyland, J.P., and Mr. P. Thompson, on "Juvenile Delinquency." (The last five are past students of the Catholic Workers' College.)

Fees: For board, Lodging and Lectures, £3 5s. For lectures only, 10s. The Guild will be grateful for any contributions to assist poor and unemployed students to attend the School.

Address all enquiries and applications to:

Secretary, Catholic Social Guild, Oxford.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

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