

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE

Catholic Citizen

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

Vol. XVI, No. 5.

15th MAY, 1930.

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.

The Open-Door Council and the White Paper.

By HELEN DOUGLAS IRVINE, M.A.

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance is affiliated to the Open Door Council, and has made this organization's policy its own so thoroughly that to state it in the CATHOLIC CITIZEN can, in May 1930, hardly be necessary. Few members of the Alliance can be unaware that the O.D.C. stands for equal conditions for men and women in the labour market, and therefore for the abolition of the restrictions which debar women from certain occupations and limit their activities within others. It contends that women, now full citizens of the state, should have neither a start nor a handicap in the race for work and wages.

The filial affections of St. Joan's are gratified by a triumph scored by the O.D.C., no less an achievement than that of having awakened the Home Office to the necessity of defending those clauses of the Factory Acts which allow women to work in factories for a less number of hours in the day, and of days in the year, than men, and which exclude them from certain kinds of work lawful for men. It is not long since the need for this so-called protective legislation would have been generally regarded as self-evident. To have extracted from the Home Office this admission that it is a questionable need, requiring proof, is a success indeed. Moreover, the Home

Office's defence has been embodied in a White Paper which has occasioned a large amount of comment in the press, culminating in a *Times* leader, all of which seconds the effort to stimulate thought on this very important subject, and incidentally gives welcome publicity to the O.D.C., acknowledged in the *Times* and elsewhere to have inspired this activity of a government department.

The White Paper confines itself strictly to the discussion of the extent, if any, to which the restrictions on their working conditions have limited the employment of women. It confessedly does not consider how far industrial women need the protection which the restrictions allegedly provide, or how far this alleged protection is effective. It examines trade after trade, and in the case of each asks whether the number of women employed has been reduced by the restrictions. In reply, it shews that in every industry, the percentage of women employed has risen in the period for which the Factory Acts have been in force. So numerous and various are the causes for this increase, dependent on most of the factors which have modified our society and economy and mechanized industry, that it is hardly pertinent to the enquiry in hand. The White Paper fur-

ther considers the distribution of women among the processes in single industries. Here it becomes less facile, for it is unable to ignore either that the less mechanical and better paid kinds of work, as well as those involving the heavier labour, are almost universally reserved for men, or that the experience of the war years shewed that women were capable of these processes. It admits that in one case women are excluded by a powerful union, and in another by the prohibition which prevents them from doing night work. But it avers that, in general, women are employed almost exclusively on ill-paid, repetitive processes because of a strong local or trade custom, because their employers regard them as temporary workers who will presently be married, or because their own expectation of marriage deprives them of ambition. Again and again, this document states that "legislative restrictions do not appear to have had much influence on the employment of women in these industries," "legislative restriction does not appear greatly to affect the women's employment," "the character of the work really determines the allocation of processes," "the division of work between men and women tends to settle itself naturally."

To take the restrictions at the White Paper's own valuation is therefore to regard them not as beneficial, but merely as harmless. The White Paper cannot be regarded as an impassioned defence of restriction for it claims no more for it than that it is, within the field considered, inoperative. Since it is impossible to argue that inoperative legislative should be retained on the statute book, the government is left with the onus of justifying these enactments.

Mrs. Abbott, in a letter to the *Times*, has described the White Paper as a piece of "political pamphleteering." As such, it is weak as well as specious, deliberately narrowing its field of study to convenient limits, not disdaining to make the merest debating points, and conveying an impression of unconvincing pedantry. It is superficial work, a compilation of official figures, accompanied by generalizations which they do not justify. It is backed by no genuine knowledge and inspired by no honest spirit of enquiry. This White Paper has done us a good turn by advertising a cause we have at heart, but otherwise it is negligible.

St. Joan of Arc.

St. Joan's S.P.A. proposes for the future to keep holiday on May 30th, date of the Martyrdom of our Patron St. Joan of Arc. This year we also celebrate the first anniversary of the day when men and women went to the polls on equal terms in this country. The Alliance is giving a dinner at the Cosmos Restaurant (157 Oxford St., nearly opposite Bourne and Hollingsworth), on Friday, May 30, at 7-15, tickets 3s. The guest of honour will be our very good friend, Dom Gilbert Higgins, C.R.L., who is Honorary Canon of Rouen Cathedral. Dom Gilbert Higgins joined us in our early days, and has been a faithful friend and subscriber ever since. Our junior members will do the honours, with Miss Butler-Bowdon in the Chair; we are to have three minute speeches from those on whom we count to carry on our work.

We hope that the observance of the 30th of May will become a tradition in the Alliance.

International Notes.

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS AT CARTHAGE.

In reply to a letter from Father Martindale, S.J., St. Joan's S.P.A. has sent the following letter to be laid on the altar in the Carthage Amphitheatre where the Martyrs suffered:

"The members of St. Joan's S.P.A. desire to unite themselves spiritually with the universal Act of Homage being offered to Our Lord at Carthage. They beg from God the gifts of charity, union and peace which are the special fruits of the Holy Eucharist, and a rich measure of the spirit of self-sacrifice which is taught by Holy Mass, and ask, in union with the Holy Martyrs, SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, and the child-martyrs of Carthage, St. Monica and St. Augustine, to receive every grace necessary for their Christian life, and for their country."

(continued on page 41.)

Notes and Comments.

It is gratifying to find practically the whole of the Press unanimous in support of the protest, organised by St. Joan's S.P.A., against the exclusion of women from certain restaurants, after specified hours, unless escorted by men. The Alliance has received many congratulations upon the success of the meeting at the Kensington Town Hall, and is now considering the next move in the campaign to procure the abolition of this ridiculous ban. The resolution passed at the meeting has been sent to every member of the Royal Commission on Licensing, and to such restaurants known to have refused to serve women not accompanied by men.

* * * *

On April 8th, a deputation from the Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations, (to which St. Joan's S.P.A. is affiliated), was received at the Colonial Office by Lord Passfield, who was accompanied by Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. The object of the deputation was to make known the views of women on the problem of slavery, more especially domestic slavery, which experts among men have a lamentable habit of overlooking. By domestic slavery we mean the buying and selling of wives, and the sale of children for domestic service, or for any other purpose. The deputation was introduced by Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, President of the Council, other speakers being Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., Miss Nina Boyle, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, and Miss Helen Ward.

* * * *

The Deputation asked that a permanent Slavery Commission should be set up under the League of Nations; that women should be appointed to this Commission, and that marital or domestic slavery existing among coloured races should be included in its terms of reference. A further request was made that a woman adviser should be appointed within the Colonial Office, whose function should include the collection and dissemination of information affecting the status and well-being of women, both British and native born in the Colonies, Dependencies and Territories.

While assuring the deputation of his sympathy, Lord Passfield stated that he was

not convinced of the advisability of appointing a woman adviser at the Colonial Office, but thought that a woman might do useful work on the Committees appointed by the Colonial Office. A questionnaire had been sent to various Governors requesting information relating to the position of native women.

Lord Cecil stated that in his opinion the definition of Slavery in the Slavery Convention is wide enough to include marital or domestic slavery. That definition lays down that "Slavery is the condition or status of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised."

In our opinion it is an extraordinary thing that any doubt should have arisen that the enslaving of wives is included in such a definition.

* * * *

We much regret the decision of the Labour Party to veto the adoption, by the local body, of Miss Monica Whateley, as candidate for St. Alban's because of her connection with the Open Door Council. We have before us a letter from the Labour Party in answer to the resolutions passed at the Annual Meeting of St. Joan's S.P.A. With regard to the resolution dealing with women candidates for Parliament, the Labour Party says, amongst other things, "We are a democratic body, and our constituency Parties are as free to select women candidates as men." From recent events it would seem that they are not free to select either men or women. The Party has placed itself in a peculiar position for a democratic body.

* * * *

We are deeply grateful to our gallant members who sold the CATHOLIC CITIZEN at Tyburn on April 27th. They were the Misses Barry, Butler-Bowdon, Collins, Gunning, Mrs. Hand, Mrs. and Miss Kerr, Miss Maitre, Mrs. Laughton Mathews and Mrs. Thomas. They were very successful.

* * * *

In connection with the article on the 'Spirit of Militancy,' we remind our readers that a detailed account of the militant movement will be found in 'Towards Citizenship,' obtainable from 55 Berners Street, price 2s.

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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The Spirit of Militancy.

The erection of a statue to Mrs. Pankhurst in the heart of London, under the shadow of the House of Commons, which so often witnessed her arrest, has aroused interest once more in militant tactics, which twenty years ago were a nightmare to the Government and the police.

The generation grown up since the war, familiar with women voters and women M.P's., and enjoying a freedom unknown at that time, may well ask themselves what all the row was about. They cannot imagine the burning hatred aroused in many men at the prospect of an enfranchised womanhood. Anti-suffragists were haunted by a grim spectre, the creation of a fevered imagination.

At the time when Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kennedy rose at a *liberal* meeting, and putting a courteous question as to woman suffrage, were violently ejected and afterwards imprisoned, the cause of woman suffrage was a mild joke to politicians and a matter of indifference to the public and the press. Within a short time it became a burning question separating friends, discussed by every man, a fruitful source of "copy" to all journalists.

At first militancy consisted in a constitutional and peaceful attempt to present a petition to Parliament, which inevitably ended in the arrest of Mrs. Pankhurst and her companions who were taking the petition,

and many of the onlookers who were doing nothing. The militancy was provided by the police.

It must be remembered that before the Women's Social and Political Union challenged women to rebel against subjection, every constitutional method had been exhausted: great public meetings had been held, huge petitions had been presented to Parliament, members of Parliament had been returned pledged to support Woman Suffrage. The movement had reached a deadlock; no party—at that time—was prepared to take the risk of fathering a bill: Mr. Asquith, when Prime Minister, was reported to have said that woman suffrage would be won over his dead body.

Every movement on the part of the W.S.P.U. was countered by coercion, and still more coercion on the part of the Government. Even so no act of violence was committed by any woman until after "Black Friday." On that day orders had been given to the Police—always placed in a very difficult position—that no arrests must be made during one of the famous demonstrations which had been advertised. Women suffered great violence, and declaring that broken glass was better than broken bodies, the raid on the shops of Regent Street was engineered.

If violence increased later this was due to provocation on the part of the authori-

ties; responsible statesmen jeered at a policy of pin-pricks, responsible papers sneered at the antics of domestic pussy; but it was left to Mr. Hobhouse to make the statement that there had been no popular sentimental uprising such as had accounted for the burning of Nottingham Castle in 1832, or the destruction of the Hyde Park railings in 1867. Women became convinced that the Government was trading on their alleged weakness, and believed there was nothing to fear from a pack of women. Then real acts of violence were committed, but always the women suffered most. Both the Leaders and the rank and file were prepared to die in what had become to them a holy war. Nothing daunted them, neither the horrors of a hunger strike, nor forcible feeding, nor yet the prospect of death.

The achievement of militancy was marvellous, the guerilla warfare carried on by women, old and young, reduced the authorities to hysteria. To procure a peaceful political meeting all women were barred out; when a Cabinet Minister was advertised to speak in a provincial town, it was defended as though against a foreign enemy, barricades were raised, police drafted in, and the great man smuggled into the meeting by a back entrance. Despite these precautions, the dreaded cry, "Votes for Women," would sound from skylight or organ loft, and inevitable pandemonium followed.

If the militant movement never reached the force of mob fury its effect on law and order was more disastrous. Authority and the law were openly flouted. Women of high character, of all ages, of all classes, were driven to acts they abhorred because, as they took occasion to explain, men could only understand violence. Girls fresh from college stood in the dock proud of being arrested in a great cause, and made uncomplimentary remarks to the magistrates. The Government was powerless to quell the spirit of this strange kind of law-breaker, and in endeavouring to do so covered itself with ignominy.

Militant women possessed the martyr's selfless devotion, and the verdict of history will crown their heroism, indeed the statue to Emmeline Pankhurst bears witness that judgment has been already passed.

L. DE ALBERTI.

International Notes.

(Continued.)

CATHOLIC CELEBRATIONS IN HUNGARY.

Catholics in Hungary are celebrating this year the 900th anniversary of St. Emery, Prince of Hungary. We are asked to make known to our readers that congresses will be held in June, July and August. The celebrations will culminate in the Eucharistic Congress, to be held in August 18th—22nd. A Congress of Teachers and the International Social Week will be held in June. A Congress of Catholic Women, and another of Catholic Youth, will take place in August.

Anyone desiring to attend or to speak at any of the meetings is asked to communicate at once with Miss Barry, at 55 Berners Street, W.1.

* * * *

Equal Rights (U.S.A.), reports the first meeting of the Inter-American Commission of Women, created by the Sixth Pan-American Congress, 1928. In opening the Conference, Doris Stevens, Commissioner for the U.S.A., and chairman of the Commission, emphasized the fact that for the first time in history women appointed by Governments had met to propose world law to improve the position of women. Among the many distinguished women were Senhora Flora de Oliveira Lima, appointed by her Government as Commissioner for Brazil. She is assistant librarian of the Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

The Conference met at Cuba. Women all over the world are deeply interested in this new milestone in the woman's movement.

* * * *

Turkish women are making headway, they are now eligible to be elected to municipal Councils, and have the municipal vote. Since then, the *Times* reports that the Minister of Justice has appointed two women as Judges in the Law Courts in Angora and Constantinople; and the I.C.W. Bulletin announces the appointment of Mlle. Weddi Beha as attaché to the Turkish legation in Washington.

It seems that Turkey is ahead of Great Britain.

L. DE A.

The Unmarried Mother.

The tired welfare worker or District Nurse, opening her paper after a hard day's work, with the distressing story told by some distracted mother still ringing in her ears, may be able to give help and advice on a very distressing subject, after reading these few lines.

Many and varied are the schemes to help these poor mothers, and the great need of such schemes is verified by some very revealing figures concerning the death rate of illegitimate children and their mothers, given by Dr. Jarvis, Medical Officer of Health of Leeds.

Five per cent. of the babies born in Leeds, he said, were illegitimate, and the death rate of these children was over twice that of the legitimates. Between the years 1923 and 1927 the death rate of illegitimates under a year was 191 per thousand, compared with 87 legitimates.

The position of the unmarried mother, says the same authority, is very unenviable. The death rate of these women is 8.6 per thousand, compared with 4.5 per thousand married mothers. In 1928 the comparative rate was tremendously higher.

If this is the percentage of one town, the bald statistics for the entire country must be much more alarming, in face of which even the great efforts made by religious and lay bodies seem too small to combat with this overwhelming evil.

Multiple are the evil causes of this canker worm which ruins the purity of our girls, and it is therefore the business of every English man and woman to investigate, and improve this terrible state of affairs.

Lack of parental authority—a thing almost unknown by many children to-day—harmful agencies that speak so loudly and recklessly to the senses, the secrets of birth control confided to the girl by her tempter, harmful reading about uncontrollable impulse and woman's unconscious call to child bearing, these are some of the causes, and by them the mass of girl life is deplorably equipped for the battle of existence. No home training, no real grasp of religion, her only joy the sensational cinema story, so with her lip-stick and face powder she must secure

a boy at any cost, be he good or bad, and more often than not he has had no moral training. No wonder that the end is disgrace and despair—pointing the path to the river,—prevented in many cases by God's Providence, which points to the Rescue Home.

Another evil cause, and one most glaring lies in the hideous housing conditions of our big towns.

ST. MARGARET'S HOME, LEEDS, is one of the big efforts to help to repair the ravages made on Society by this great evil. Here girls of any and every class, find not only a refuge and shelter, but a home in their trouble. It is most necessary for the girl's sake, as well as for the unborn child, that they should be removed from evil surroundings, and in many cases of the better class, from an atmosphere of deceit and hypocrisy, and placed in a normal and sane mode of life. These lives are sacred, and must be sheltered at the earliest possible moment. Motherhood in these girls is a harder task than for the married mother. They are mothers by accident, and have none of the things which go to the making of happy motherhood in married life.

At St. Margaret's Catholic Home every endeavour is made to place the girl in a new way of living and thinking, and the duty of the child put forward as an incentive of good conduct. A life far different from the old one, with good sleeping accommodation, regular meals, and work with sufficient recreation. Work made as interesting as possible, and training given where necessary to increase the mother's wage earning powers. There is ample time for this as the girl may enter as early in pregnancy as she wishes, and must at least stay two or three months after. As even the loss of this short time of liberty is very difficult for the girl of the present day, it is necessary to make it as interesting as possible, and they must definitely see what they gain by it. Those in charge of them understand that it is most necessary to fill their minds with fresh interests, to overrule the excitements of their past life. They are like

children, easy to amuse and interest, but the interest must be varied.

No unnecessary Rules mar the serenity of the Home. The girls understand that the peaceful little chapel, with the Blessed Sacrament present, is theirs, and as the shades of evening fall, whilst still the sounds of laughter are heard from the girls' recreation room, silent forms are often seen kneeling in the dim light of the Sanctuary lamp, where many have found peace through troubled ways.

All help in religious matters is given by the Spiritual Director of the Home, and it is unnecessary to add that repentance for the past and sincere amendment and hope for the future are the foundations of this Home. The girls rise at 7 a.m. and after Mass or short morning prayers, commence the day. They are trained in cooking, by a very competent cook-housekeeper, house parlour work and pantry work. Laundry work for those for whom it is suitable, and there is a well-equipped night and day nursery where under a trained sister and nurse the mothers are taught how to wash and dress their babies. The latter spend a greater part of the day in the garden. Needlework is taught in the afternoon, combined with instruction on various subjects, and it is proposed to add machine knitting, and lessons in leather work, for those to whom it would be useful.

The staff is composed of Matron, Sister, two Nurses and Cook Housekeeper. Each has her own private bed-sitting room, and a bright pleasant room, fitted with a five-valve wireless set, serves as dining and recreation room. The girls' recreation finishes at 8-30 p.m. All assemble once in the Chapel for night prayers, concluded with the evening hymn, sung with a vigour that denotes the singers are singing from their hearts, even if their voices are not quite musical.

Very soon no sound is heard except the quiet step of the night nurse as she arranges her babies, admits any temporary case for shelter in the Shelter room kept for that purpose, and is ready for the usual emergencies.

M. M. CALEY.

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TREASURER'S NOTE.

There are still many members who have not yet sent their subscriptions to the Alliance and the CATHOLIC CITIZEN. May I again beg that these should be sent without delay.

VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS,
Hon. Treasurer.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Secretary: Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A.,
45 Falkner Street, Liverpool.

A very interesting meeting was held on April 15th, when Dr. Fitch spoke to us on the work of the Child Guidance Clinic recently established in Liverpool. We were also very pleased to welcome and to hear Miss Margaret Rippe, a London member, who has come to Liverpool for two months to stimulate the establishment of clubs for Catholic girls in our parishes. As a result of her appeal, seven members volunteered to attend a brief course of training in order to be ready to act as leaders for the clubs about to be started.

The Branch heartily congratulates Miss Mabel Fletcher, C.C., J.P., a good friend of ours, on her becoming Liverpool's first woman alderman.

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