

The 'Housewives' Declaration' goes public



2100 people at Royal Festival Hall

ON THE EVE of the Referendum on Europe more than 2,000 Britons – mostly housewives – converged from all over the British Isles on London's Royal Festival Hall to proclaim some 'Home Truths for International Women's Year'. And they were supported by others from France, Holland, Germany and Switzerland as well as from America, Africa and Asia.

Labour and Conservative supporters, trade unionists of forty years service and titled women, immigrants and their white neighbours, young and old, were among the 47 speakers at this unusual rally.

'There has been much talk about the need for a decisive answer in the Referendum,' said French-born Claire Evans from Cambridge. 'More important still is the decisive "Yes" we give to God here. With it, in or out of the Common Market, Britain will give that moral leadership all nations long for.

'If, under the veneer of idealism, we are committed to ruthless selfishness (I want to get more and give less) Europe will drown in materialism and inflation, and drag others down with her.

'If we want to improve society, but are committed to our own way of doing it (Everybody must join my sect, or

adopt my political point of view, or just become more like me) we will inevitably be divided into warring factions and laid open to any bid for takeover.

'If our commitment is to God (Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven) we will manufacture and offer for export to all continents a new society with all the unexpectedness, buoyancy and deeply satisfying qualities which are the hallmarks of God's creations.'

Speakers ranged from last year's President of the National Council of Women to the National Secretary of the Salvation Army Home League, from a gold medallist Branch Chairman of the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers to a British Davis Cup winner, from the President of the Bangladesh Women's Association in Great Britain to the daughter of a former cabinet minister in South Africa's Transkei. The emphasis was not on well-known names but on well-earned experience.

There were speakers from homes that had suffered in the depression and from homes of privilege.

Betty Gray, a former teacher from

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Sylvia Haller from Switzerland sings 'Look at the children'.

NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



Kensington housewife and grandmother Lydia Granby, photographed by the *Daily Mail*, in front of the Royal Festival Hall's auditorium which she hired a year ago simply because she felt the housewife ought to be given a platform in International Women's Year.

She kept it until February but, as no one seemed interested, she gave it up. But the conviction would not leave her and when she discovered that she would have to pay for it anyway, she took it back again. She still couldn't find any support. 'I even approached the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds as I heard they were good at getting audiences.' But to no avail.

'Then seven weeks ago I read the "Housewives' Declaration" which fell into my lap and wrote to Mrs Evans. Five weeks ago today we took the step,' she told the Festival Hall audience on 4 June. 'I would like to say to any who have doubts – or ideas – let this be an example. If you have a God-given idea don't let anybody tell you you're mad and it can't happen. Because you're the living proof that it can!'

Newcastle, said, 'We in the seventies are the prisoners of the unhealed bitterness of the thirties.' She had looked to a Communist revolution to end the system which she had blamed for the suffering of her family. But when she decided not to be ruled by bitterness she found a faith. 'I found that I could lay all bitterness at the Cross. This freed me to work alongside anybody who wanted to participate in this much bigger revolution which is for people of all classes, beliefs and colours'.

Nancy Hore-Ruthven, an actress, said

Whether we say 'Yes' or 'No' to Europe the important thing is what we as a nation have to give.

'The Guardian', quoting Kristin Evans

she had come from the kind of background which helped to create class bitterness. But she and her family had decided to sell their home 'in order to make resources available for projects of real social value to the country and world'. She wanted 'to launch a programme of change and sacrifice from the top'.

'How many of you would be willing to take a 10 per cent wage cut,' she asked. 'It could create a new spirit, give us new values and heal divisions.'

Annejet Campbell, whose father Frederik Philips used to employ 400,000 people around the world, said, 'Our aim

WE WOMEN of all walks of life and many nations assembled here in the Royal Festival Hall, London, send you greetings.

We know that equality, development and peace are possible through our own decision and experience. To us:

Equality means we share equal responsibilities for putting right what is wrong and creating the world we long to see—husband and wife, young and old, black and white, management and worker. As I am, so is my nation.

Development means we care for growth in character and faith as well as in health and wealth—in our homes, in our schools, in our own and each other's nations. To fill hands with work, stomachs with food and empty hearts with an idea that really satisfies.

Peace means we face the truth about ourselves—our hates, our selfishness, our lusts. People like us are at the root of every world problem. Sin is the disease, the living God, is the cure. We can listen to Him and obey. We can change. Peace is not just an idea, it is people becoming different.

Message to the UN World Conference in Mexico for International Women's Year sent from the meeting 'Home Truths for International Women's Year' at the Royal Festival Hall, 4 June 1975.

is not to dish up a form of rehashed capitalism but to build a new world out of new people.'

Joanna Nash, at 22 Britain's youngest councillor, challenged those present from the older generation: 'Stop exploiting us. Speak out against those who are trying to deny to a future generation all the enthusiasm and satisfaction that is their right. Speak up for families. Speak out against the evil that degrades marriage and sex, that regards children as a nuisance.'

Idealism was being crippled, she said, by the emphasis on demand—higher wages even if not deserved, abortions on demand, state nurseries. 'We will try to stop thinking about what we imagine to be our rights and start thinking about our duties. We will see running a home and bringing up children as an exciting challenge, a vocation not as a drudgery.'

'We will be grateful for homes and for food, for warmth and for peace, for the freedom which enables us to speak out, to vote, to unite freely, to take our share in the running of the country. We won't seek to "fulfil ourselves" but to work for the good of society.'

Kristin Evans and her sister-in-law, Erica Evans, who together wrote the Housewives' Declaration, chaired the morning and afternoon sessions at the Festival Hall. 31,000 copies of the Declaration had already been printed, they said.

They had written the Declaration, said Kristin Evans, a farmer's wife, because they felt that the nation's values were wrong. 'We take for granted the things that people in most parts of the world would give anything for—food, health and education.'

We had to get our sense of values sorted out, she said, and this depended on our passion to see that everyone had enough to eat. 'We know how much our children pay for their chocolate,' she said. 'Do we think whether the children of the West African cocoa growers are fed?'

A friend of hers, a skilled pig man but working in a plastics factory was now able to afford to start buying his own house. With agricultural wages this had not been possible. 'If we go on this

I'm on a story about the fashions worn at such an occasion.

'Vogue' photographer

way we shall one day go to the supermarket and that nice bit of food packaged in plastic bags won't be there any more—just the plastic bag,' she said.

Different families demonstrated in practice some of the eight points in the Housewives' Declaration. Maisie Croft of Sheffield told how she had been challenged to 'care about the standard of living and true happiness of families across the world'. Starting with the conviction that a cup of rice should go from every home in Sheffield to Bangla-



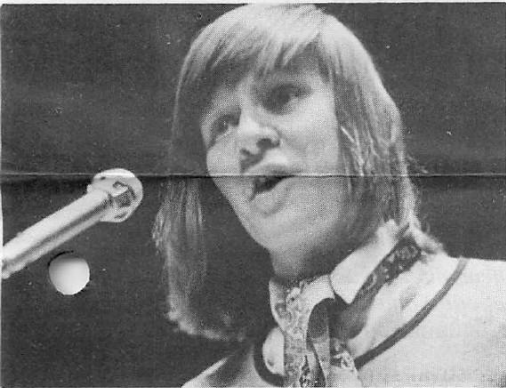
desh, she had set out along her street armed with a cup, a plastic bag and a copy of the Declaration. Now a shipment of 18 tea chests, six drums and six sacks, two tons in all, was on the high seas—and standing with her in the Festival Hall was a leader of the Bangladeshi women.

A South London housewife, Marie Embleton, illustrated the sentence: 'We will make new friends including people of different backgrounds and races.' She had begun to get to know immigrant families in her neighbourhood. 'When I decided to obey God it shifted our family from indifference to a heartfelt concern for the community in which we lived.' A West Indian friend was standing beside her to tell how as a result she had for the first time discovered the purpose for which her family had come to Britain. Together the two families had taken a play incorporating their convictions to different parts of Britain.

To an Irish couple the important point was: 'We will refuse to let entrenched attitudes of the past shape our future.' Jim McIlwaine, a senior shop steward in a Belfast factory, described how he had travelled in a party with a Catholic priest to America and Canada. Whenever they were in the same room Jim would go to the other side of it. Then God put the thought into his mind; 'Jimmy, you're a fraud because you have said in the past that the Catholic people in Ireland didn't want to be part of the government of your people but in your heart you've despised their culture and you've used that as an excuse to justify much of the discrimination and bigotry that went on in your country.'

He had been a Christian for 20 years but for the first time he had faced the deep prejudice in his life and apologized to the priest. 'We have learned to respect each other—and that is what we need more of in Ireland,' he said.

His wife, Mary, said that some Protestants had decided to boycott



(above right) Jim and Mary McIlwaine from Northern Ireland: 'Even in the midst of violence, murder, sectarian bitterness it is possible to change.'

(above) Singer Caroline McCausland: 'If we could have faith and conviction nothing is impossible for us to do.'

(above) Councillor Joanna Nash: 'Some values are eternal. They are the right of our generation as much as yours.'

(above left) Norma Richards and, behind, Marie Embleton from South London: 'Building bridges of understanding.'

Catholic shops in her neighbourhood. She had been tempted to change from her hairdresser to a Protestant one. But she had known this was wrong and had gone back to her original one.

'Then when more violence happened where we lived, a lot of Catholic people decided to move out. My hairdresser came out and said to them, "No, I won't move. These people have given me their custom. So therefore I'll stay with them." And a lot of these neighbours that had practised discrimination have come back to my hairdresser to get their hair done. One lady said to me that it was the people at our part of the road that actually saved the whole neighbourhood because had we given in to prejudice and discrimination everyone would have had to leave the road.'

Erica Evans summed up, 'We are fed up with the assumption that the only things the housewife cares about are her standard of living and her house-keeping purse. It's time we did our own thinking, stood on our feet and said that we care about our share in tackling inflation.'

'Today is part of a spontaneous combustion of ordinary women. No,' she said to loud applause, 'there is no such thing as ordinary women. Housewives are the most important people in the world. If we can't tackle inflation, who will?'

'We've got to think of next year and after that. We're concerned now with something we take on for life.'

Businessman's declaration

AT THE FESTIVAL HALL a Yorkshire employer spoke together with his family and said that the uniting purpose of their family life enabled him to take greater responsibility for the nation.

John Vickers, Managing Director of a specialist oils firm in Leeds, said, 'Thinking men and women all over the nation are concerned about the economic and ideological situation of our country. The encouraging feature, however, is the initiative that ordinary people are taking themselves to put things right. Whole industries can help if they are given leadership.'

My trade federation approached government when the oil crisis broke. As a result several multinational refining companies co-operated by rescheduling production programmes. They were able to provide our member firms with the necessary minimum supplies of raw materials so that we kept large sections of British and overseas industry at work.

If we do not now get hold of our

Before we have an economic miracle in Britain, we will need a moral miracle in our people.

Erica Evans

economic situation, foreign investors could lose confidence in our willingness to face reality. The weekly pay of two million workers are presently financed by foreign borrowing. That many jobs could be lost. This is something that we British alone can solve and must solve so that we can play our full part on the world scene.

There are two areas for action. First inflation. I think of one firm where management proposed, and all the employed staff and workers accepted, an annual increase of income which is two-thirds of the going rate of wage settle-

In a world increasingly penetrated by ideas which deny the dignity of life and by ideas which falsely value women and undervalue children it is essential that women see the greatness of their true role.

That role is to create the conditions for peace, to resist what destroys the conscience and intellect, and to lead society to intelligent creative action.

Message from Betty Beazley, wife of the Australian Minister for Education

The aim is to show how ordinary people can affect change.

'Daily Telegraph'

I saw the silent majority find a voice.
Swiss housewife

ments. This kind of thing is happening.

Second is the leadership which employers can give. For some time I have operated on the basis that whenever there is an important decision I myself consult with all our staff and employees, in small groups, so they are informed and can participate. Of course they give their best.

There are certain proven principles which should undergird British industry today:

1. Any dispute can be solved on the basis of *what* is right, instead of *who* is right.
2. A revolution comes about when employers really care so that people come before profit—our own firm serves an industry which is still in severe recession. But we have made no-one redundant.
3. A change of attitude enables employers, employees and government to work together effectively. This is the alternative to the sterility of class war, and is the quickest way to put right what is wrong and to build a new society.
4. We have the spur to meet all our problems in Britain when we set out to meet the needs of people all round the world.

Perhaps the most fundamental issue before us all today is to find a new motive so that we really care for the deepest needs of all men of all classes. This means a down to earth assessment of the real causes which have produced the present impasse. It is an historic opportunity. Whoever grasps it first may salvage mankind for a generation and more.'

They are recommending not only equality but also integrity.

BBC Radio 4

I read about the meeting in the Daily Mail and got straight on a train.

Guildford housewife

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This weekend a conference is being held at Banff, Alberta, with the theme 'Canada and the United States—partners in a world task'. This article is written by an American, Anne Hamlin, who has lived the last eighteen months in Canada.

Partners in a world task

WITH THE RIPPLES of Watergate still felt in all corners of the United States; the agony felt about the way America has ended her involvement in Vietnam; and economic crises compounding the problem of integrating the Vietnamese refugees into US society, one could easily argue that it is high time America withdrew and tended to her own affairs.

With industrial strife and social upheaval in Quebec; concern about inflation; and the continuing strong feelings of minorities such as the Indians and the French Canadians—one could also find just cause for Canadians to stay at home and work at solving their own concerns.

Relations between Canada and the US are not all they might be as the two nations haggle over the prices and quantities of resources to be sold and exchanged between them. Canada is tired of being considered as America's little brother in the background, and is clearly asserting her individuality around the world. And many Americans feel their neighbour to the north is suddenly getting 'uppity' and forgetting its place.

Yet just at this time a representative group of people from across these two countries will be meeting together in conference on the theme 'Canada and the United States—Partners in a World Task'.

Those organizing and attending the conference include practical, experienced people from all walks of life—people who believe a new approach must be tried to solve the problems that confront all of us today. What they have in common is the conviction that as attitudes in individuals change, situations can change and answers be found to the most difficult questions.

Some of the themes that will be discussed and grappled with at this conference include: How can Canada and

the United States together tackle the food crisis in the world and find the ways to remove the 'bottlenecks' that prevent the food from getting to those who need it? How do we bring about a new development in industry which leaves behind confrontation and class war as out of date? How can each individual play an effective and constructive role in modern society?

Those attending the conference will be qualified to tackle these problems as the delegates include farmers and government agricultural experts, politicians, trade unionists and management men, Canadian Indians, teachers and students, housewives and community leaders from right across the continent. Also present will be black and white from South Africa, Maori and white from New Zealand, and others from Australia, Britain, India, Holland, and Switzerland. The government of Canada is sending official representation, as are the provincial governments of Quebec and Alberta.

It is undeniable that there are very serious problems in both Canada and the United States, internally and between each other; also undeniable that the US has made many grave and costly mistakes in many parts of the world. However, these two countries do have a vast proportion of the world's resources, technological skills, money and power. Also, both countries were built on a foundation of true democracy and deep faith in God which form a reserve of strength and greatness that can yet be called for and drawn upon.

It may be that as North Americans grapple with the questions this conference will face and seek together a new kind of co-operation and responsibility, individually and nationally, they will begin to find a new conception of their nations' role in the world. Perhaps the answer to having had the wrong kind of world role is not to retreat and have none, but to take on the world again in a totally fresh way, with deep humility, unselfish care, and under God's direction? That is what those coming to this conference hope to discover and decide.

●Dr Ernest Claxton, former Principal Assistant Secretary of the British Medical Association, spoke about the Banff Conference in a sermon at St Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario. After reading out the text of the invitation he said, 'We can't all go to Banff but we can all be part of a Christian revolution. For myself it meant change in attitudes, habits and motives. It meant freedom of conscience and an over-riding purpose. It came through an experience of listening to the inner voice, the Holy Spirit in my heart and obeying.'

WOMEN *continued from page 3*

To those who've given the line that Britain is finished I'd like to say 'Rubbish'. I have been stirred by what I have heard today. Britain is a country of the initiative of the ordinary man.

Indian journalist

The new society will be home-made.

Oxford housewife

During the war we used to have the sign 'Is your journey really necessary?' Now we should have 'Is your purchase really necessary?'

Wife of Dutch broadcaster from London during World War II

I've had phone calls all day since my article. A lady has just told me she would have brought a busload of people if she had known earlier.

Reporter, on the telephone to the Festival Hall

My God, I thought we were going to hear about women's rights and it was about women's duties.

Community organiser

A C 60 cassette (60 minutes) containing highlights of the Festival Hall meeting will be released shortly.

Price—£1.60

postage and packing (UK) 20p

(European continent, airmail) 25p

(Australia, airmail) 50p

Orders, enquiries, cheques/postal orders to Chris Hartnell 12, Palace Street London SW1E 5JF.

Copies of the Housewives' Declaration can be obtained from MRA Books at 2p each plus postage. Orders of 100 copies and over at 1p each plus postage.

Male say so

Speaker after charming speaker made the point that men were necessary to overall female aim...

Hereford farmer's wife, Mrs Kristin Evans, said she was used to handling pigs on her 400-acre farm. But support of the male chauvinist variety—said many of the women—was also needed...

Some of the menfolk who joined their wives in the debate told how they had been converted to the cause. Belfast shop steward Mr Jimmy McIlwaine used to tap his wife's leg in disapproval at meetings whenever she said something with which he disagreed.

'I thought Mary's views ought to be the same as mine,' he said. 'Until one day I did it again, and she kicked me in front of a crowded hall.'

It was a victory for equality

DAILY MAIL