

## Chapter Seven: 'Gendered Spaces' – White Female Social Reformism and the Making of Krugersdorp, 1903–1918

### Introduction

Krugersdorp became an increasingly gendered space from 1903 onwards as numbers of white, mostly English-speaking middle-class women arrived in the town. Some of these women began to shape the town as they promoted their social reformist campaigns for temperance, social purity and women's suffrage. Female activism around social reform grew rapidly during this period and helped to inject a sense of moral order into Krugersdorp that was virtually absent in the 1890s.

In the process white female social reformists helped to subdue the 'Wild West' male-dominated culture of gambling, public drunkenness and street brawling that characterised the 'Devil's Dorp', as Krugersdorp was then known (see Chapter One). In this way female activists built on the 'civilising' work undertaken by the church-going middle class in the 1890s and early 1900s (see Chapter Two) and drew on the sentimentality and parental concern engendered by the growing presence of children (see Chapter Four), to 'stabilise' Krugersdorp into a settled 'family' town.

Local temperance campaigns, led by female activists, severely restricted the potential number of licensed liquor establishments in the town. The Liquor Licensing Court rejected dozens of liquor licence applications every year as it came under considerable pressure from vociferous and well-organised temperance campaigns. Thus, Krugersdorp's built environment was shaped by female activism as the distribution and location of bars or canteens in Krugersdorp was channelled away from some areas (~~near schools, for example~~) near schools and the ~~and the~~ entire suburb of Burgershoop was, ~~for example~~, kept free of liquor outlets. White female, middle-class activists also threatened to turn Krugersdorp into a 'dry' town in 1916 and achieved considerable success in restricting access to liquor for young, enlisted men during the first two years of the First World War.

Female activism was not limited to the control of liquor consumption, however.

Women campaigners also attempted to limit white male sexuality in a wide-ranging series of related campaigns during the period 1912 to 1916. This Chapter will argue that, although sporadic and muted, white female activists succeeded in creating substantial public concern over white male sexuality that can be usefully termed a 'White Peril' moral panic. ~~Like its~~ While the 'Black Peril' counterpart, this moral panic ~~focussed on~~ ~~focused on~~ the threat posed by black male sexual predators to young white girls, ~~the~~ ~~but targeted white males instead of black males as sexual predators.~~ The 'White Peril' ~~also~~ ~~inverted~~ ~~this to express, among other things, concern about~~ ~~white men's sexual relations with~~ the 'Black Peril' fears around black males sexually assaulting white females by naming and shaming white men who co-habited with black ~~wom~~men.

In addition, female activists campaigned to raise the age of consent and increase penalties on white men who seduced young white girls. During this period, several high profile court cases were held in Krugersdorp to prosecute white men who had violated white female adolescents. Furthermore, attempts were made to curb sexually transmitted diseases by focusing on the white male patrons ('johns') of prostitutes and white men were blamed, too, for the seduction of young white girls into a life of prostitution dramatically described as 'White Slavery'.

These prominent and often sensational campaigns gave white middle-class female activists publicity and influence that was far out of proportion to their numbers. Probably no more than fifty women were involved actively in the organisation of the various campaigns, meetings and rallies at any given time but they captured the white public's attention with their imagination and daring. ~~The impression of female power which they cultivated was deceptive, however, because, in~~ ~~in~~ reality, ~~however,~~ most of their campaigns fizzled without achieving all their aims, and setbacks were more common than successes.

Nonetheless, ~~while white female activism frequently fell short of their goals, white female activists~~ they did dominate public life in the town during a crucial, formative period in Krugersdorp's history. They leveraged this influence to achieve a major

reform in local government, that is, the extension of the municipal suffrage to women and the right of women to serve as Town Councillors. ~~From~~In 1915 ~~onwards~~, female municipal voters ~~elected~~could not only vote but could also stand as candidates for the women onto the Rand's Town Councils. Women made it onto Town Councils throughout the Rand but narrowly missed (except in Krugersdorp where female candidates narrowly missed election in Krugersdorp). ~~This and this~~ accession of women to political power resulted in a range of reforms that substantially improved the lives of women living in these towns, including Krugersdorp, as female candidates forced male Town Councillors to pay attention to these issues. ~~The~~refore, ~~they~~white female activists did, ~~in the end,~~ make a real difference that impacted on Krugersdorp's society and its built environment.

Eventually, however, female social reformism provoked a conservative backlash during the years 1917–18. Males in the armed services supported by male civilians in Krugersdorp and other towns, ignored restrictions on their access to liquor to such an extent that these curbs ~~were were rendered~~ ineffective. Female activists were challenged by their own constituency of white middle-class women who were seduced by the 'War Effort' ideology that stressed women's supportive role to the 'men in uniform'.

As a result of this backlash no women contested the municipal elections held in Krugersdorp during October 1916 nor during the rest of the war period. Attempts to turn the town 'dry' were stalled and then reversed as the number of liquor licences climbed rapidly. Bills that promised social reform for women, particularly those focused on female suffrage, were defeated in Parliament, while membership of female social reform organisations plummeted in the town, as they did throughout South Africa. Women literally retreated to their homes to knit socks for the troops and the 'cult of domesticity', ever present in the background, claimed its hegemony over Krugersdorp's white middle-class women.

This Chapter will study the rise and fall of white female activism and social reformism in Krugersdorp. It will focus mainly on the Krugersdorp Women's Christian

Temperance Union (WCTU) as the most active and successful women's group operating in the town, but will also consider the roles played by other women's organisations such as the Guild of Loyal Women, the Krugersdorp Benevolent Society, the South African Women's Federation, the Women's Reform Club as well as various charity organisations. The growing influence of female-dominated social reformist organisations will be carefully traced and explained while their impact upon Krugersdorp's society and built environment will be carefully examined.

It will be thus contended that white English-speaking middle-class women, who formed the bulk of the members and supporters of these groups, constituted an influential political force in the town and that their activism helped to 'make' Krugersdorp, in a meaningful sense, during the period 1903 to 1918.

### **The Feminising of Krugersdorp's Population: 1902–1905**

After the South African War of 1899–1902, many English-speaking white men in Krugersdorp either brought their wives from Britain or other colonies or married for the first time, confident that British rule would bring prosperity and stability. Many of these miners were approaching their early thirties and this realisation may have prompted them to seek a more domesticated life. Furthermore, the Milner Administration promoted schemes to attract white women from Britain to settle on the Rand,<sup>1</sup> marry and to have children so that English-speaking whites would

<sup>1</sup> See C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand*, ~~Volume~~vol. 2, *New Nineveh*, (New Nineveh), Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982, Chapter One: 'The Witches of Suburbia: domestic service on the Witwatersrand, 1890–1914', especially footnotes 33 to 49. See ~~also~~ M. Streak, *Lord Milner's Immigration Policy for the Transvaal 1897–1905*, Rand Afrikaans University Publication, Series B1, January 1969; *The Star*, 30 April 1902, 'Female Emigration'. A particularly useful source is J. J. Van-Helten and K. Williams, 'The Crying Need of South Africa: The Emigration of Single British Women to the Transvaal, 1901–10', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10, 1, 1983, pp. 17–38.

~~Studies, 10, 1 (1983), pp. 17–38.~~

predominate when representative government was ultimately restored (see Chapter Four).

The number of white women grew rapidly in Krugersdorp and soon the town's sidewalks were filled with young mothers pushing their babies in perambulators. The character of the town was transformed from a violent and dangerous place into a more settled, stable and sedate residential area. Shops specialising in domestic goods and female apparel flourished (**See Figure 7.1**) while recreation facilities became more family-orientated as parks and swimming baths replaced music halls and gambling dens.

There is, unfortunately, very little information available on the composition of Krugersdorp's population on gender lines before 1903 so some tentative reconstruction is required using Johannesburg's statistics. Johannesburg's adult white population was 39 454 in 1896 including 9 208 adult white women who formed 23% of the total. It seems likely that the ratio of males to females would have been similar for Krugersdorp. Krugersdorp was much smaller and the town's entire white population numbered just 431 in 1890 and had barely grown to 600<sup>2</sup> by 1894, although it probably numbered 1 000 by 1898.<sup>3</sup> By 1903, about 2 000 whites lived in 440 houses in the town itself.<sup>4</sup> White women are unlikely to have numbered more than a quarter of the total white population in Krugersdorp during the 1890s so there were probably no more than 150 to 250 white women in the town during the period 1894–1898.

**Figure 7.1: Women in Krugersdorp as eConsumers of fFashion, c.1908.**



<sup>2</sup>-The Star, 29 August 1894

<sup>3</sup>-Ons Volk, 3 May 1898,

<sup>4</sup>-The Standard, Krugersdorp

Source: *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 August 1908, advertisement.

Source: *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 August 1908, Advertisement.

Given the high ratio of males to females in Johannesburg and the shortage of suitable paid work for single women, most of the women on the Rand were married within a short space of time.<sup>5</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the statistics of 1896 that indicate that 61% of white women in Johannesburg were married compared to just 42% of the men. Most of these women also decided to start families shortly after becoming married and this is borne out in the 1896 census that indicates that Johannesburg had 5 624 white families and a total of 20 480 white children out of a population of about 100 000 whites.<sup>6</sup> Again, Krugersdorp is likely to have shared a similar demographic profile. The majority of the white women in Johannesburg were born in the Cape Province, Natal or the Boer Republics, whereas the white male

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<sup>5</sup> Van Onselen, *New Nineveh*, Chapter One: footnote 18. See also 'Lady Pioneers on the Rand' in *South African Lady's Pictorial*, 2, 13 September 1911, and 'Lady Pioneers on the Rand' in *South African Lady's Pictorial*, 2, 20 April 1912, and M. Alston, *At Home on the Veld*, London, 1906.

<sup>6</sup> All figures are taken from tables drawn up in L. Lange, 'White Working Class Families in Johannesburg, 1890–1906', ('White Working Class Families'), Centre for Advanced Social Research Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1997, Tables 1–5. See also M.L. Lange, *White, Poor and Angry: White Working Class Families in Johannesburg*, Race and Representation Series, Aldershot and Burlington, Ashgate, 2003.

population was more evenly divided into those born on South African territory, [in](#) Britain and the Dominions of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Again, there is no reason to believe that Krugersdorp would not have had the same demographic profile.

Johannesburg's white women, like its men, were relatively youthful but generally women were much younger than men. About 13% of white women fell into the age group 20–24 years compared to 3% of the males.<sup>7</sup> About 20% of white women fell into the 25–29 years age group compared to 9% of the men while 27% of white women were aged between 30 and 39 years of age compared to 23% of men. A total of 60% of all white women in Johannesburg were under the age of 39 years of age compared to 35% of the white men.<sup>8</sup> A similar gender-defined disparity in age seems likely for Krugersdorp, an estimate that appears to be confirmed in the marriage registers for St. Marks' Church in 1904.<sup>9</sup>

Krugersdorp was, however, much smaller than Johannesburg and had relatively greater numbers of Dutch-speaking white residents in the west of the town and these two features made the town quite different to Johannesburg. The proximity between English- and Dutch-speaking white women combined with the small size of the population, was likely to have promoted greater interaction between these two groups in Krugersdorp than was the case in Johannesburg. Since Afrikaner women were generally much more conservative than English-speaking women, this interaction seems to have made social reformism less militant and far-reaching than was the case in Johannesburg and the East Rand with important consequences that will be explored below.

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Archives of the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), University of the Witwatersrand,

~~Vol.~~

~~AB 2003, file JK 7.5.1, 'Marriages solemnized at St. Marks' Church in the Parish of~~  
~~Krugersdorp,~~

~~1904, pp. 1–6. The ages of the grooms and brides (the latter in brackets) were~~  
~~respectively: 30 (26),~~

~~30 (27), 30 (30), 29 (30), 33 (18), 25 (21), 24 (21), 24 (17), 31 (21), 26 (28), 42 (25).~~

A municipal census in that year (covering a large municipal area that included many farms and mines) counted 6 657 whites of all ages in 1903–4. Of these 2 675 were females and 1 500 were over the age of fifteen years.<sup>10</sup> Extrapolating from a wide variety of later local municipal censuses, it can be estimated that a third of these women lived in the town itself and probably two-thirds or 300 of these women would have been English-speaking females. If these estimates are correct, then there was a slightly lower concentration of English-speaking white females in Krugersdorp than in the far East Rand towns of Benoni and Brakpan where women made up 40% of the white adult population around this time.<sup>11</sup> This lower concentration of women could, perhaps, have made Krugersdorp's women more reticent, less militant than elsewhere on the Rand, with important effects on the ways that social reformism developed, as will be seen later in this Chapter.

### The AAadvent of WWwhite FfFemale AAactivism in Krugersdorp, 1903–1907

The first major women's group to establish a branch in Krugersdorp was the Guild of Loyal Women (GLW). This was a patriotic movement which appeared in Krugersdorp in 1903.<sup>12</sup> and which -maintained the graves of British soldiers<sup>13</sup> (see Chapter Three), organised public celebrations on Empire Day and sponsored school bursaries for children<sup>14</sup> (see Chapter Four). The South African Women's Federation (SAWF) was a similarly conservative women's group that came to prominence in Krugersdorp in 1906 and whose main function was to promote reconciliation between English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites<sup>15</sup> and it, too, obtained school bursaries for children.<sup>16</sup> The Krugersdorp Benevolent Society, established in 1907,<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Krugersdorp Public Library (KPL), *Municipality of Krugersdorp, 1903–4, Mayor's Minute, 1903–4, For the Year ending 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1904*, Mayor's Report, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> D.H. Humphriss, *Benoni: Son of my Sorrow*, Town Council of Benoni, 1968, p. 30.

<sup>12</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 13 February 1904, 'Guild of Loyal Women'. The local branch was apparently formally 're-started' on 6 May 1903, but no references can be found for an earlier branch.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* For more on the Guild of Loyal Women, see also P. Merrington, 'Vergelegen: a case study in 'A Staggered Orientalism: The Cape-to-Cairo Imaginary', *Poetics Today*, 22, 2001. literature, 'heritage', and public history, in *Saval Conference Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, 1998, page numbers and P. Merrington, 'A Staggered Orientalism: The Cape-to-Cairo Imaginary', in *Poetics Today*, 22, 2 (2001), pp. 323–364.*

<sup>14</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 June 1905, 'Guild of Loyal Women'.

<sup>15</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 January 1906, 'Women's Federation'.

<sup>16</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 5 May 1906, 'South African Women's Federation', 'Quarterly Report'.



was a non-denominational charity association and also emerged shortly after the South African War.

These three conservative women's groups shared members with the relatively more radical and militant women's groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Women's Reform Club (WRC) that were ~~also~~ formed in Krugersdorp later, during this period (to be discussed in detail below). Their conservatism may well have acclimatised the males of the town to the growing presence and public profile of English-speaking middle-class white women in the town. This would have facilitated a sufficient degree of toleration and an amenable social environment that would allow the more activist WCTU and WRC to emerge and grow without being nipped in the bud by hostile male resistance.

These conservative women's groups may also have served as incubators allowing young women to become used to addressing public meetings and organising campaigns that were popular with the wider populace. This meant, so that when they launched their relatively more activist and militant social reformist campaigns, they had developed the necessary skills to ensure that their movements survived local opposition. It also meant that these new organisations could attract sufficient range and depth of membership to allow it to launch its more ambitious campaigns after Union, for a sufficiently lengthy period to enable it to attain a critical mass that would facilitate its success in the years that followed.

The origins of a WCTU branch in Krugersdorp are not at all that clear but seem to be associated closely with the local Wesleyan Church that was active in temperance affairs.<sup>18</sup> In 1904, the church hosted a meeting, organised by the Independent Order

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<sup>17</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 18 May, 1907, 'Krugersdorp Benevolent Society'. See also E. Bradlow, "The Oldest Charitable Society in South Africa": One Hundred Years and More of the Ladies' Benevolent Society at the Cape of Good Hope, ('LBS'), in South African Historical Journal, 25, 1991, pp. 77–104. (1991), pp. 77–104. The Krugersdorp Benevolent Society appears to be based on the LBS.

<sup>18</sup> Archives of the Krugersdorp Wesleyan Methodist Church, 'Resolutions, Objections and National Events', undated, p. 1.

of Good Templars (IOGT), a well-established British-based temperance movement, which was addressed by two delegates from the British Women's Temperance Association (BWTa), a Miss Vincent and a Miss Cummins. These women had previously preached 'total abstinence' at 'well-attended meetings' in the town where 'pledges' (that is, sworn oaths to give up drink) were signed.<sup>19</sup> It appears that it was at this meeting where it was proposed to form a branch, curiously not of the BWTa, but of the WCTU, an American-based temperance movement.<sup>20</sup>

Mrs F.W. Lewis, the wife of a well-known local merchant (see Appendices One and Two), was elected its president and Mrs Andreka, the wife of a popular local Greek butcher (~~see Appendix One~~), was elected its Treasurer. ~~These Both~~ women's husbands had been prominent in local politics and had served on Krugersdorp's Sanitary Board. This suggests that the movement had strong middle-class underpinnings and its leadership came from an elite group of social notables, a pattern that persists throughout the period under study.

The WCTU held its first meeting at Mrs Lewis's home a few days later when it had already attracted seventeen lady members and eight 'honorary' gentlemen members.<sup>21</sup> An invitation to join the branch was extended to those residents of the town who were also members of the BWTa 'from the Home land' and members of the WCTU 'from other countries'.<sup>22</sup> This, ~~which~~ indicates that some sort of association existed between the two bodies and also suggests that some residents were already members or, at least, affiliated members of these temperance organisations.

<sup>19</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 13 February 1904, 'The Temperance Mission'.

<sup>20</sup> The date for the commencement of the Krugersdorp branch of the WCTU is incorrectly recorded as 1906 in the official centenary history of the WCTU, see Women's Christian Temperance Union, The Women's Christian Temperance Union in South Africa, 1889–1989 (WCTU), -printed by the WCTU, Observatory, Cape Town, 1990, p. 88. The history is kept in the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) Archives in the collection of the Women's Enfranchisement Union Association (WEAU).

<sup>21</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 20 February 1904, 'Temperance Mission'.

Although the Union stressed that it was 'entirely undenominational',<sup>23</sup> it had a close historical association with the Wesleyan Church that was apparently replicated in Krugersdorp. For example, a 'Band of Hope', the WCTU's juvenile section, was started by Krugersdorp's Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1905.<sup>24</sup> Prominent local Wesleyan Methodists who were also members of the local branch of the WCTU included Mesdames Lewis, Stammers, Smith, Hull, Clarke and a Miss Penny.<sup>25</sup> This list also suggests that many of the local WCTU's members were married<sup>25</sup> and this is confirmed by analysis of the references to members from a large number of fragmentary newspaper sources that suggests that twenty-eight out of the thirty-five members — whose names are recorded — were married (see Appendix One).

Many members belonged to more than one women's group in the town and this is suggestive of the role that earlier women's groups may have played as 'incubators' for developing women's organisational skills, discussed earlier. For example WCTU members Mesdames Hadley, Smith and Goodwin all belonged to the Krugersdorp GLW while others belonged both to the local branch of the SAWF and the LBS (see Appendix One). Within the nurturing environment of a broad umbrella movement, the Krugersdorp branch was able to grow rapidly until it had sixty members comprising forty female and twenty male 'honorary' members within three months of its inception.<sup>26</sup>

The WCTU's rapid growth in Krugersdorp attracted a visit by Miss Agnes Slack, the Secretary of the World's WCTU, in July 1905.<sup>27</sup> Miss Slack was also Secretary for

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 20 February 1904, 'Temperance Mission'. *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Krugersdorp Wesleyan Methodist Church*, private, untitled collection: 'Wesleyan Sunday School', p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Krugersdorp Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 'Wesleyan Sunday School', p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> <sup>24</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 February 1904, 'A Wesleyan Welcome'.

<sup>23</sup> *Krugersdorp Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 'Wesleyan Sunday School', p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 February 1904, 'A Wesleyan Welcome'.

<sup>25</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 July 1905, 'World's Women's WCTU', 'Next Week's Conference'.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 July 1905, 'World's Women's WCTU', 'Next Week's Conference'.

the BWTA and a worker for the Women's Liberal Federation, an important political association.<sup>28</sup> This influential woman presided over a well-attended meeting of the local WCTU at the Krugersdorp Wesleyan Church.

Under Miss Slack's influence, the Krugersdorp WCTU branch abandoned its initial promotion of 'temperance' and announced that its aim was not to merely 'reclaim drunkards' but to educate the public sufficiently to bring about legislation for 'legal prohibition and the complete banishment of the liquor traffic'.<sup>29</sup> It also announced that it would target the education of children and press for the introduction of the teaching of 'Scientific Temperance' in schools as was already the case in Britain, [the](#) USA and the Cape Colony.

This hardening stance of the WCTU prompted, for the first discernible time, a hostile reaction from a section of the town's white male middle class. The male editor of the local newspaper published a letter by the WCTU but accompanied it with a rare editorial comment where he pointed out that he had only published this letter upon the general principle of allowing 'free discussion of all matters of public interest'. The editor stressed that he and his colleagues felt that the views of the writer could 'not unfairly be described as Utopian'. The editor also bitterly remarked that while the term 'Temperance' appeared in the WCTU's name, it really favoured prohibition.

Therefore, the editor argued, the movement 'practically sails under false colours'.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while female social reformism in Krugersdorp, had a relatively auspicious start and attracted a section of the white female English-speaking middle-class residents of the town, it also provoked a degree of local white male hostility.<sup>31</sup>

The newspaper's editor and its proprietors seem to have taken a conscious decision to ignore the WCTU at this point and the temperance group received [virtually no sparse](#) newspaper coverage for nearly two years, from 1905 to 1907. During this time, there is some indication that Krugersdorp's GLW, SAWF and WCTU branches

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<sup>28</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>29</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 14 April 1906, 'Correspondence: A Plea for Total Abstinence', letter from Honorary Secretary. ~~See~~ WCTU, Krugersdorp branch, 5 April 1906.

<sup>30</sup> ~~ibid.~~, 'Editor replies'.

began to take up the cause of women's suffrage, perhaps in response to this expression of male, middle-class hostility. ~~This is dealt with in the next section. Female social reformism in Krugersdorp, thus, had an auspicious start and rapidly took hold of the imagination of a section of the white female English-speaking middle-class residents of the town while, apparently, provoking local male hostility, at least from the local, male-dominated newspaper.~~

~~The Krugersdorp WCTU branch appears to have been well organised from the start and to have established close ties with a range of established female organisations in the town. Furthermore, the branch had joined a federal movement and had attained leadership positions in the Transvaal WCTU.<sup>34</sup> This meant that Krugersdorp's WCTU was likely to be influenced by its neighbours as much by local conditions. The involvement of international figures in the formation and development of the local branch also suggests that external influences were likely to be exerted on the local branch. This, in fact, is what happened as will be demonstrated later. One of those influences was the growing campaign, already strong in Britain, for women's suffrage.~~

## **Women's Suffrage 1906–1907**

Krugersdorp's local newspaper had, since its inception, ignored the issue of women's suffrage ~~since its inception~~ and no reference can be found in its pages until 1906, ~~despite its topicality~~ Yet female suffrage was very much in the public spotlight in metropolitan Britain, where women had served on parish councils and school boards since 1865, and on Town Councils ~~since 1869~~.<sup>32</sup> It was an ominous portent

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 September 1904, 'The White Ribbon Army'. Mrs Stuart, the Vice-President of the Krugersdorp branch, was elected President of the Transvaal WCTU while two ordinary members, Mrs Lewis and Mrs Greenfield, were elected as Vice-President and Corresponding Secretary, respectively. In 1911, Mrs James, the President of the Krugersdorp branch, served as acting President, see Women's Christian Temperance Union, *A Brief History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in South Africa*, Townshend, Taylor and Snashall, Printers, Cape Town, 1925, p. 19. The curious title may have been a misprint as the organisation was always referred to as the 'Women's Christian Temperance Union'.

<sup>32</sup> See P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865–1914, (Ladies Elect)*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, p. 477.

that its first article on the subject was bitterly negative. The article claimed that women's suffrage had 'failed' in the state of Colorado in the United States and suggested that many women of the artisan and 'general middle class' thought it was 'not womanly to vote'. It claimed that women tended to be swayed by irrelevant and irrational factors like a male candidate's good looks or if they took a dislike to his wife.<sup>33</sup>

This article provoked an immediate response from a member of the Krugersdorp branch of [the](#) Guild of Loyal Women. The writer pointed out that the members of both the GLW and the SAWF 'took an active part in politics'. She observed that their members 'follow the course of political events quite as closely as our husbands and brothers do'.<sup>34</sup> The anonymous writer ended by suggesting that women should not only have the vote but should be able to stand for Parliament, pointing to the late Queen who was 'as capable a politician as any of her ministers'.<sup>35</sup>

The editor responded defensively to this letter and it must have surprised both him and the newspaper's middle-class readers as both the GLW and SAWF were moderate women's groups not given to challenging the establishment. Indeed, the local branch of the GLW was given prominent coverage by the local newspaper and generally received high praise for its dedication to the Empire.

A further surprise was in store when, six months later, a number of women belonging to the Guild attended a meeting to hear an address by a representative from the Johannesburg branch of the British Women's Federation (BWF), a newly formed patriotic women's body similar to the Guild. The speaker, Mrs Walker, said that while the GLW should continue its focus on 'social and philanthropic work', this new

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<sup>32</sup> See P. Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914*, *Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914 (Ladies Elect)*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1987.

<sup>33</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 March 1906, 'How Woman Suffrage Works: - Voting in Colorado'.

<sup>34</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 8 March 1906, 'Women's Suffrage'. The Editor, stung by the rebuke, defended himself by pointing out that he had talked about the 'average woman' and that he had no doubt that if the writer had the vote she would exercise it 'as intelligently as any man in the Transvaal'.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> ~~*ibid.*~~

movement would 'undertake the new political work'.<sup>36</sup>

Although expressing support for the women's franchise, the speaker's words were qualified and restrained, perhaps to avoid giving offence to men and to win over the generally cautious and conservative women of the town. A sample of her speech illustrates this:

...she dared say that a great many men in the room might say, that women should have nothing to do with politics – but she was sure that they were young men, [as] older men had learned better counsels (laughter and cheers). Although she was a political woman, she was not an advocate of women's rights; women had no rights which could be obtained by political measures. What rights she might claim, she was a strange woman if she could not get them in some other way (laughter). But women might rightly claim to take an intelligent interest in politics.<sup>37</sup>

One possible reason for such qualification and reticence is fear of the hostility that women would face if they pressed the cause of suffrage too hard. Such women ran the risk of being branded as 'unnatural' or 'masculine' together with a whole series of negative traits that were combined later into a catch-all phrase, the 'Amazon', a phraseterm that was used frequently in the male-dominated local newspaper to describe sportswomen.<sup>38</sup> Thus the speaker may have used domestic imagery and played down an aggressive demand for 'women's rights' out of fear of provoking male hostility.

Interest in female suffrage in Krugersdorp was aroused by the formal A-motion for women's suffrage that was introduced in 1907 in the Cape House of Assembly. – but when the The influential politician John X. Merriman – a notorious enemy of female suffrage – used his considerable powers of persuasion and 'barbed wit' to attack the proposal and; it was defeated by 64 votes to 22.<sup>39</sup> On closer inspection, there

<sup>36</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 6 October 1906, 'Federation of British Women'.

<sup>37</sup> ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, The Standard, Krugersdorp, 20 May, 1905, 'Amazons at Play', an article about the

Krugersdorp Ladies' Cricket Club.

<sup>39</sup> C. Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa', BA Honours dissertation, University of

seem to be intriguing links between Merriman's rejection of female suffrage and his hostility towards the women's temperance campaign.

The Franchise Bill coincided with a slump in the Cape wine industry and wine farmers wanted to increase the sale of light wines. A sympathetic M.L.A. parliamentarian introduced a Bill in the same year that would extend hours of sale, to allow farmers to sell any quantity of wine on their premises to all races and to exclude prevent members of temperance societies ~~to sit from on sitting on~~ Select Committees on liquor affairs. The Cloete Act of was passed (the Cloete Act of 1907) ~~and~~ 'raised a storm of protest from temperance societies'.<sup>40</sup>

In response, Merriman led ~~the an~~ attack on the Cape branch of the WCTU and made a number of 'real male chauvinist' statements like a 'woman's place is in the home'.<sup>41</sup> It seems that there was a strong linkage between Merriman's defence of Cape wine farmers against female temperance campaigners and his rejection of the female franchise. A similar dynamic, it will be argued below, played out in the Transvaal.

~~In 1907, the Krugersdorp WCTU had re-emerged into the public limelight, as the local newspaper renewed its coverage of the local branch, and, furthermore, that women's suffrage was firmly on its agenda. The Krugersdorp WCTU took up the torch of women's suffrage that was initially carried by the GLW and SAWF. In the previous year, representative government was granted in the Transvaal and these various and distinct developments are unlikely to be completely unconnected.~~

An important new political force had emerged in the Transvaal in 1905 in the form of the Het Volk Party that can be traced to the early meetings of the Krugersdorp and

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~~—~~ Cape Town, 1979, p. 27. See also P. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African*

~~—~~ *Statesman*, A.D. Donker, Johannesburg, 1982, p. 285, who noted that Olive Schreiner and other

~~—~~ leading Cape suffragettes continued to hold him in high regard.

<sup>40</sup> J. McKinnon, 'The Women's Temperance Union: Aspects of Early Feminism in the Cape, 1889–1930' ('The Women's Temperance Union'), M.A. dissertation, Unisa, 1995, p. 120.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 121.



District Farmers' Association.<sup>42</sup> This party quickly consolidated the Dutch-speaking white voters in towns like Krugersdorp and threatened to dominate the Transvaal Legislative Assembly as Dutch-speaking whites constituted the majority in the Transvaal. The English settlers on the Rand rallied behind the pro-British Progressive Party and it seems likely that at least some English-speaking women volunteered their time to help canvass in support of Sir Abe Bailey's election campaign for the Krugersdorp seat.<sup>43</sup> Bailey won his seat and it is possible that the local newspaper may have renewed its coverage of the WCTU's activities after the elections out of gratitude towards the female campaign volunteers. Whatever the reason, the WCTU was back in the public spotlight and used this attention to launch a public campaign for both temperance and female suffrage.

### The Krugersdorp WCTU's ~~P~~politicisation 1908–1909

Whatever the reason for its renewed interest in the WCTU, *The Standard, Krugersdorp* certainly gave more publicity to the temperance women's organisation from 1907 onwards. For example, ample coverage was given to a WCTU meeting in 1907 in Krugersdorp that was addressed by the prominent Johannesburg merchant and temperance campaigner, William Hosken, a Member of the Transvaal Legislative Assembly (MLA).<sup>44</sup> He was accompanied on the stage by Messrs. Blevin, a local mine manager and Lewis, a local merchant and husband of a key local WCTU leader. The meeting was striking for the dominance of male speakers, its political content and for its candour about the hostility that the movement attracted among middle- and working-class males in the town.

The Chair, Rev. Goodwin, referred in his opening remarks to the 'unpopularity of the cause in Krugersdorp', noting that he had approached a 'number of men' to show

<sup>42</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 23 April, 1904, Editorial: 'The Seeds of Home Rule'. See also *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 May, 1905, Editorial: 'Two Congresses' and 'Talk of the Town'. ~~See also~~  
~~*The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 February, 1905, 'Het Volk' and especially 'Het Vrij Volk'. See also~~  
~~*The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 May, 1905, 'A proud boast' which notes that 'the past record of the~~  
~~Dorp as the jumping-off place for every national movement...'~~

<sup>43</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 October, 1906, 'Mr. Bailey at Krugersdorp'.

<sup>44</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 5 October 1907, 'WCTU'.

their sympathy by taking a seat on the platform, 'but each and all had made their excuses'. Mr Hosken confirmed this by describing the cause as 'weak' in Krugersdorp in comparison with 'the rest of the world'.<sup>45</sup> The content of the speeches indicate that men and women treated intemperance in distinctly different ways. The male speakers all talked extensively about Parliament or the effects that alcohol production had on the grain production statistics of the nation. This contrasted with the WCTU's previous female speakers who tended to focus on the impact that intemperance had on families and which appealed to men and women at an emotional level.

Only one woman, Mrs James, the President of the local WCTU, spoke at this particular meeting and her speech was not reported in the local press. Indeed, the only reference made specifically to women was to note that they provided some musical entertainment at the end of the meeting.<sup>46</sup> It appears that the [female](#) members of the Krugersdorp WCTU were, at this point, locating themselves in and around the 'Home' even when presenting a public issue on a public platform.

The decision to allow male speakers to dominate the WCTU meeting may have been a strategic decision to bring the issue into the mainstream and to win over male supporters. This impression is reinforced by the continuation of this approach at WCTU meetings for the rest of the year. Yet, slowly and steadily, the example presented by the male speakers at local WCTU meetings appears to have influenced the female members and a 'political approach' began to permeate the speeches made by the female members of the Krugersdorp WCTU late in 1907. The branch also adopted its most audacious and public campaign yet, in the same year. Some background needs to be provided to understand this campaign properly.

What had happened was that an attempt was made to secure a liquor licence in

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* Hosken recalled that he had last addressed a 'temperance meeting' in Krugersdorp '18 years ago', which suggests that Krugersdorp had been part of earlier temperance activity, as early as 1889.

~~Unfortunately there is no supporting evidence for this claim as there are no references to a temperance movement in Krugersdorp before the South African War.~~

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp, 16 November 1907, 'W.C.T.U., Drawing Room Meeting'.*

Burghershoop, an area of poor, largely Dutch-speaking whites.<sup>47</sup> This news seems to have galvanised the WCTU into action as the largely English-speaking and middle-class members apparently believed that they could use this focus on Burghershoop to attract Dutch-speaking working-class whites into the movement and appeal, in the process, to the desire of many of the middle class to 'do something' to uplift their fellow (white) men and women. A sincere spirit of philanthropy probably underlay this concern for the urban poor, a phenomenon that had inspired, in Britain, 'at least twenty thousand salaried, half a million voluntary, and many thousands of church women' to give their time to the 'homeless, rootless, and handicapped...a hugely impressive effort in time, money and imagination, and benevolence'.<sup>48</sup>

The campaign was a daunting prospect though, as one of the applicants for a liquor licence was H.S. Kingdon, a local notable who later served as a Town Councillor from 1910 to 1912 [\(see Appendix Two\)](#).<sup>49</sup> He was very popular with the sporting men of the town as he was secretary of the Krugersdorp Wanderer's Club, its Association Football Club, Rugby Club and Baseball Club.<sup>50</sup> Kingdon was also solidly middle class and served as a member of the local Chamber of Commerce.<sup>51</sup> He was, thus, not typical of the 'Peruvians' (largely Jewish economic refugees from Lithuania who formed part of a criminal underclass on the Rand) and other shady characters like Barry Joffe, the 'Liquor King of the West Rand' that were easy targets at liquor licence hearings in the past.<sup>52</sup>

Realising that they had a fight on their hands, the women of the Krugersdorp WCTU

<sup>47</sup> [The Standard, Krugersdorp, 16 November 1907, 'W.C.T.U., Drawing Room Meeting'.](#)

<sup>48</sup> Hollis, *Ladies Elect*, p. 11. See also F. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980, p. 228. Prochaska notes that a study of forty-two families in England in the 1890s found that money spent on charity was the second largest item of household budget after groceries and more was spent on philanthropic work than rent, clothes and servants' wages.

<sup>49</sup> [The Standard, Krugersdorp, 22 October 1910, untitled. See also, Krugersdorp Public Library, Mayor's Minute, \(Mayor's Minute\), 1912-3, p. 132.](#)

<sup>50</sup> [ibid.](#)

<sup>51</sup> [The Standard, Krugersdorp, 20 January 1906, untitled.](#)

<sup>52</sup> C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, Volume vol. One, New Babylon, (New Babylon)*, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982, [Chapter Two](#), 'Randlords and Rotgut', p. 76.

rolled up their sleeves and set about collecting signatures from the residents of Burghershoop for a petition against the granting of liquor licences in the area.<sup>53</sup> ~~A Many large number of~~ signatures were collected and Kingdon's application for a liquor licence was refused amidst much acrimony and a personal verbal attack on the Rev. Goodwin and on the female temperance campaigners.

Goodwin condemned the 'vengeful repayment to me for speaking in opposition to the application for a licence at Burghershoop' and noted that an attack on a 'band of noble, self-sacrificing women, in order to get back at me, is very far from playing the game'.<sup>54</sup> Despite such attacks, the campaign was a remarkable victory under the circumstances. ~~It and~~ marked a revival of the WCTU's fortunes as well as confirming what was, until then, merely a tentatively held belief that a more activist approach, at a local level, would be more successful in winning supporters and in making a practical difference in promoting temperance.

At its annual meeting at the end of 1907, the WCTU proudly reported the campaign's successes in a way that suggests that it had made substantial advances. The temperance movement had clearly been busy and the breadth of its tactics and activities is indicative of an increasingly energetic organisation. For example, the WCTU had 200 posters printed depicting the 'Deterioration of Physical Nature Through Drink' that were distributed throughout the town and the mines.<sup>55</sup>

The organisation also successfully campaigned against the illegal use of screens in many public houses.

A 'Scientific Temperance Class' was held for children from June through to November and a banner had been made up for the branch inscribed with the

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<sup>53</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 16 November 1907, 'W.C.T.U., Drawing Room Meeting'.~~

<sup>54</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 15 February 1908, 'Correspondence, A reply to 'Onlooker' by Rev. H. Goodwin'.~~

<sup>55</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 22 February 1908, 'Annual Meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union'.~~

<sup>56</sup> ibid.

WCTU's badge and its motto, 'For God, for Home, for Every Land'.<sup>56</sup> The motto can serve as an allegory for the movement's development in Krugersdorp as it emerged from an evangelical movement organised around the 'Home' by women concerned about the effects that drinking had on family life, before proceeding, with growing confidence, to tackle liquor consumption on a broader, national and even internationalist plane conveyed by the phrase 'Every Land'.

This growing politicisation may have been prompted by the provocative statements made by the (exclusively male) members of the 1908 Liquor Commission whose findings led to the promulgation of the 'Beer Bill'. The Commission's most controversial statements related to the role that local government needed to play in the provision of liquor to residents of towns. For example, the Commission enthusiastically supported the 'Durban System' where the municipality sold sorghum beer directly to African consumers in beerhalls that were controlled by the Town Council.<sup>57</sup>

It also suggested ~~also~~ that women did not go to licensed houses and so would have little interest in the granting of liquor licences by municipalities – a direct attack on the WCTU's campaigns to limit liquor licences in the towns of the Rand. The Commission also rejected 'local option', a cherished WCTU policy where the majority of voters in a municipality could vote to have their town declared 'dry', that is, an area where no liquor might be sold.

The Commissioners also made a number of provocative points concerning the municipal vote by arguing, for example, that it was undesirable to 'make every municipal election a battle-ground between the trade and the total abstinence party'<sup>58</sup> by adopting a local option clause. Furthermore, the local option vote would be open to women as well as men and this was undesirable, argued the Commission. They explained that because it would be inconsistent to allow women to vote at a

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<sup>56</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>57</sup> TA 1–1909, *Report of the Liquor Commission, Transvaal, 1908*, Pretoria, 1910, chaired by H.O. Buckle, Part II, 'Restrictions on Coloured Persons', [Chapter Two](#), 'The Native', p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> ~~ibid.~~, p. 41.

municipal level and not at the parliamentary level. Rather than removing this inconsistency by extending the vote to women at a national level, the Commission explicitly attacked female suffrage as something 'which we do not think it worth while doing'.<sup>59</sup>

The increasingly politicised Krugersdorp WCTU was stung by these remarks and immediately sent a letter to Sir Abe Bailey the, MLA for Krugersdorp, insisting that he oppose the Beer Bill. Another letter was fired off to the Colonial Secretary in support of a motion in the Legislative Assembly, aimed at curtailing the sale of intoxicants and their distillation in the Transvaal.<sup>60</sup> This marked a major step in the maturation of the Krugersdorp WCTU's temperance campaign. In the months that followed, issues of temperance and female suffrage became increasingly intertwined in the WCTU's campaigns.

~~This politicisation and broadening of its focus further encouraged the WCTU to campaign for the women's suffrage in a way that led, ultimately, to the granting of female municipal suffrage just six years later. It would be ironic indeed if the cavalier words of the unreconstructed male chauvinists of the Liquor Commission can be proven to be directly responsible for initiating a campaign for the female municipal suffrage that led to women gaining the vote at the local government level in just a few years, but there were other factors also operating to bring this about as will be demonstrated later.~~

One of the remarkable changes in Krugersdorp was the increasing support that local white males began to give to the idea of votes for women. The activities of the local WCTU and the suffrage vote in the Cape seemed to have inspired the Krugersdorp Debating Society to take up the issue of women's suffrage in 1908.<sup>61</sup> The

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>60</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 February 1908, 'Annual Meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union'.

<sup>61</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 July 1908, 'Debating Society's Parliamentary Evening', 'The Franchise for Women'.<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*<sup>64</sup> ~~*The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 July, 1908, 'Debating Society's Parliamentary Evening', 'The Franchise for Women'.~~

Krugersdorp debaters emulated the parliamentary process with speakers from the 'Government' side making what were already familiar arguments in support of votes for women.

~~These~~ arguments included the ~~claims~~ that women were taxed but not represented and that educated Africans had the vote in the Cape which meant that ~~it~~ was a 'disgrace' that their wives and sisters could not vote. The 'Opposition' member gave the usual arguments against women's votes ~~including hoary claims that~~ women did not want the vote, that it would upset the fabric of society if women voted and that women were 'temperamentally unfitted' for the franchise.<sup>62</sup> The 'Parliament' then went to 'vote' and passed its second reading ~~in favour of female suffrage~~ by a 'substantial majority'.<sup>63</sup>

This debate is indicative of growing support for this principle among the Krugersdorp's male middle-class elements that constituted the local debating society. It is hard to say, however, how representative this society was in relation to the broader white middle class in Krugersdorp because, arguably, a debating society is, ~~almost by definition, likely to be~~ more open-minded than the wider society. It appears that women's suffrage did not penetrate far into white middle-class society because it was possible for the local newspaper to carry out interviews with white ~~male~~ candidates (the municipal franchise was exclusively white ~~males and only white males could stand~~) for the municipal elections, just a few months later, without even a mention of the municipal franchise for women.<sup>64</sup> ~~This suggests~~ that women's franchise was an issue limited to the frivolity of drawing-room debates and was not yet part of serious public discourse.

Perhaps, for this reason, the local WCTU seems to have changed tack and no longer used male speakers ~~on its public platforms~~ and did not appear to try to win over local

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<sup>63</sup> ~~ibid.~~ <sup>62</sup> ~~ibid.~~  
<sup>63</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>64</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 10 October, 1908, 'The Coming Municipal Elections'; <sup>64</sup>The Standard, Krugersdorp, 10 October, 1908, 'The Coming Municipal Elections', 'Interviews with the Candidates'.~~

white males as an overt strategy. In March 1909 the WCTU held a 'drawing room meeting' in the Oddfellow's Hall that was 'packed, chiefly with ladies' indicating that this new strategy of using female speakers and explicitly addressing political issues was successful in generating excitement amongst Krugersdorp's white female residents.<sup>65</sup>

The invited speaker, a Miss Boyle, urged women to 'bestir themselves' and overcome their differences just as the various political parties had co-operated over Closer Union.<sup>66</sup> She was loudly cheered and plans were immediately made to invite her back, onto an even larger stage, this time to argue for the cause of women's suffrage to a wider audience.

The Krugersdorp branch of the WCTU did not, however, stop its campaigns around temperance nor did it suspend its concern with local issues. It seems to have as it realised the value of addressing short-term winnable goals in the locality in consolidating support while it worked simultaneously for longer-term national objectives.

The local WCTU branch, for example, it literally addressed the 'parish pump' of local politics by publicly attacking the Town Council over the poor quality of the water in the town which was often discoloured and, if left standing for a few hours, would give off a 'very unpleasant odour'. While, at first glance, this may seem a strange issue for the WCTU to adopt, it gave them the opportunity to win over many new supporters. Many parents were seriously concerned about the town's water supply and some had even recently forbidden their children from drinking from the taps at the Town Schools out of fear that they might get ill (see Chapter Four).<sup>67</sup>

This concern with the water supply also made sense for a temperance movement that wished to wean the town off liquor with a suitable alternative of fresh clean

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<sup>65</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 13 March 1909, 'Wednesday's Functions'.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 7 March 1908, 'Pure Drinking Water', letter to the Editor. <sup>67</sup> *The Standard*,



water. Indeed, the local branch seems to have adopted water as their symbol of a vital, healthy and pure temperate life. Shortly afterwards, the WCTU began to agitate for a drinking fountain in the Market Square.<sup>68</sup> This will be discussed in more detail later in this Chapter. By focusing on the local issue of the quality of the water supply, the WCTU was able to project a positive image as a concerned community-oriented organisation and also gained much valuable publicity that helped to draw local women to their cause.

In another local campaign, the WCTU tried to build on its earlier success with the Burghershoop residents by holding a meeting in the local school to resist the Council's plans to build a 'beer hall' in the suburb. Its growing public profile, its increasing popularity and its enhanced reputation, paid rich dividends and the WCTU succeeded in drawing sixty female Dutch-speaking residents to its meeting on a Tuesday afternoon.<sup>69</sup> This was a remarkable achievement for an English-speaking body as ~~research indicates that most such organisations had little success in reaching out to the mostly conservative~~ Dutch or 'Afrikander' women's ~~organisation groups that~~ marched largely to their own parochial drum.<sup>70</sup> Mrs Andreka presided over the meeting offering a 'stirring' speech that urged the women present to resist the planned building of the beer hall in the area that, she claimed, would 'exercise a very great demoralising influence upon its inhabitants and the younger generation'.<sup>71</sup>

Among the speakers there was a Mrs Ferreira, one of the few Dutch-speaking women members of the WCTU. This indicates that the WCTU was attempting to become a more inclusive body that aimed to incorporate rather than merely talk to ~~and on~~ behalf of the Burghershoop residents. A motion was then proposed that 'this meeting of women in Burgershoop do humbly protest against the opening of a beer-

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~~Krugersdorp, 7 March 1908, 'Pure Drinking Water', letter to the Editor.~~

<sup>68</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>69</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 13 July 1908, 'Temperance at Burgershoop'.~~

<sup>70</sup> ~~For more on Afrikaans- or Dutch-speaking suffrage movements see L. Vincent, "A Cake of Soap":~~

~~the Volksmoeder Ideology and the Afrikaner Women's Campaign for the Vote', Institute for Advanced Social Research Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1998.~~

hall in their neighbourhood', which was carried 'with enthusiasm'.<sup>72</sup>

A motion was then proposed to form a branch of the WCTU in Burghershoop and this, too, was carried. The WCTU's President, Mrs James, was mandated to go in person to the Licensing Court and oppose the application for a beer-hall licence for Burghershoop. No beer hall was ever built in Burghershoop and the WCTU could claim another victory.

The WCTU's campaigns around temperance issues at both a local and national level, together with its growing interest in the female franchise, marked its maturation from a small timid and fairly low-key body into a dynamic local political force working in a very public way for social reform that began to shape Krugersdorp's society and its built environment in new profound ways. ~~By early 1909 the WCTU shifted its focus even more firmly to a campaign for securing female suffrage, applying the lessons that it had learnt during the temperance campaign, to this new crusade. Soon its members began to adopt other proto-feminist causes, notably social purity campaigns.~~

~~These campaigns were aimed explicitly at controlling male sexuality in ways that potentially threatened the patriarchal underpinnings of local white society. Temperance campaigns became more militant and within seven years the WCTU was on the brink of convincing the Rand's electorate, denuded of white English-speaking men who were fighting for the Empire during the First World War, to vote to turn the region 'dry' like the United States during the Prohibition Era. Suffrage campaigns grew more militant as these women read about and openly admired the radicalism of the suffragettes in Britain, particularly the WSPU, and scored a major victory when it forced the Union government to grant white women the municipal franchise. In short, from Union to half way through the First World War, female activism was transformed into a moral crusade that grew increasingly militant and radical. To understand what was happening requires a brief detour in feminist theory~~

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<sup>71</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>72</sup> ~~ibid.~~

~~and a broader, contextual analysis of international developments during this period.~~  
Before exploring this any further, it will be useful to make a detour to contextualise the WCTU's campaigns in terms of 'moral crusades' that had been taken up by women in industrialised societies from the mid-1800s.

## Moral Crusades

The mid- to late-[nineteenth](#) century industrialised world was remarkable for an upsurge of female activism that took the form of a 'moral crusade' that advanced women's interests so rapidly and profoundly that some writers have referred to these pioneering female activists as 'First Wave' feminists.<sup>73</sup> Many such women actively campaigned for female suffrage recognising that only political power would enable them to achieve their aims of substantial social reform.

The leading female 'crusade' was temperance, a long-standing and well-established single-issue campaign. Temperance movements can be traced back in Britain to the late [eighteenth](#) century when, according to Shiman, industrialisation brought with it the concept of 'work discipline' that was promoted by the middle class. This new concept transformed the state of drunkenness from a personal failing into a 'social vice'<sup>74</sup> that was amenable to social intervention on a large scale. Social intervention took the form of evangelical religion that aimed not only to save souls but also to mould people's lives in this world, promoting a 'moral' standard of living that included ~~ing~~[sobriety](#).

A similar development occurred in the 1820s in the United States where, according to Ryan the 'social and familial dislocation' that accompanied the closing of the frontier and the rise of market capitalism caused such severe social problems that it required a 'full-scale social movement' to resolve [these](#).<sup>75</sup> It was an intense

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<sup>73</sup> McKinnon, 'The Women's Christian Temperance Union', p.-13.

<sup>74</sup> L. Shiman, *Crusade against Drink in Victorian England*, MacMillan, London, 1988, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> [Ryan, Cradle, p. 74](#). M. Ryan, *The Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*,

[\(The Cradle\)](#), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 74

<sup>76</sup> [ibid.](#), p. 11.

evangelical revival known as the 'Awakening', that served this purpose, helping to discipline the newly proletarianised workers into a hardworking, honest, frugal and sober workforce. Ryan's study of Oneida County in New York State traced how the

fires of revival kindled a fervent desire to rid the world of  
intemperance, slavery, prostitution, profanity, Sabbath breaking  
...and nearly every sin that a seventh-generation Puritan-turned-  
Victorian was capable of imagining.<sup>76</sup>

Apart from this essentially functionalist explanation, various writers have attempted to explain the rise of evangelicalism and female-dominated and middle-class social reform movements in terms of identity politics. According to Ryan, Johnson pointed to the large numbers of shopkeepers and artisans that made up the revival movement and suggested that evangelicalism served also as a 'mode of self-definition' for the middle class.<sup>77</sup> Caine agrees with this perspective and points out that religious revival in the early nineteenth century was also an important factor in 'establishing the outlook and power base of the provincial middle class' and enabled this emerging class to construct a 'new standard' which its members could use to distinguish themselves from the working class and to 'demonstrate their gentility and their entitlement to status and respect'.<sup>78</sup>

None of these arguments, however, explains the dominant role that women played in these evangelical social reform movements. Women had, after all, been restricted to the 'Home' by the 'cult of domesticity'. The 'cult of domesticity' has been described as an approach where 'middle-class women apparently accepted their role as the ministering angel, supervising a man's comfort in a well-appointed...home'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> ibid., p. 11.

<sup>77</sup> ibid. <sup>77</sup> ibid.

<sup>78</sup> B. Caine, *English Feminism, 1780–1980*, (*English Feminism*), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 83. See also L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes, 1780–1850*, London, 1987, pp. 76–106. <sup>78</sup> B. Caine, *English Feminism, 1780–1980*, (*English Feminism*), Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 83.

— See also L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes, 1780–1850*, London, 1987, pp. 76–106.

<sup>79</sup> E. Bradlow, 'Women at the Cape in the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century' in *South African Historical Journal*, 19, (1987), pp. 51–75, pp. 61 and 74. See also E. Bradlow, 'Women and Education in Nineteenth-Century South Africa: The Attitudes and Experiences of Middle-Class English-Speaking Females at

McClintock has challenged this conventional understanding of the 'cult of domesticity' by suggesting that it was 'not simply a trivial and fleeting irrelevance, belonging properly in the private, 'natural' realm of the family' but was rather a 'crucial, if concealed, dimension of male as well as female identities –shifting and unstable as these were – and an indispensable element both of the industrial market and the imperial enterprise'.<sup>80</sup> This is a potentially fruitful re-working of the concept to introduce both a public dimension and male identity. It is useful in understanding how women were able to use domesticity to break out of the home and enter public life.

Another concept used to describe the situation of women in Victorian times – and one also challenged by McClintock is that of 'separate spheres' which holds that women were confined to the 'private sphere' of their homes while their husbands and fathers engaged in the 'public sphere' of work and politics. Levine explains that the concept was really an 'ideology' that was 'culled severally from religion, economic need, biology and tradition'.<sup>81</sup> An explanation for the rapid movement of women out of the 'private sphere' of the family and their insertion into the public sphere through social reform movements, and their leadership role in these movements, has been usefully explained using the concept of the 'Woman's Mission' that has been separately explored by Ware and Caine.

Ware summarises the 'Woman's Mission' as the 'heavy emphasis on the distinctive characteristics and roles of the sexes' where women were ascribed 'special qualities', especially 'refined sensibility'.<sup>82</sup> While this meant that women were largely restricted to the 'home' instead of taking part in the 'real world', its also made them

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the Cape', in *South African Historical Journal*, 28, (1993), pp. 119–150, especially pp. 119–120.

<sup>80</sup> A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, (*Imperial Leather*), Routledge, New York, 1995, p. 5.

A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, (*Imperial Leather*), Routledge, New York, 1995, p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> P. Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850–1900*, (*Victorian Feminism*), Florida State University Press, Tallahassee, 1987, p. 12.

<sup>82</sup> V. Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*, Verso, London, 1992, p. 66.

particularly suitable to play a 'useful part... in public societies working for social and moral reform'.<sup>83</sup> Caine argued along similar lines that while the 'Woman's Mission' served to 'reinforce the idea of women's necessary domestic seclusion', it was nonetheless also formulated in 'terms of a mission' which required a public duty and which 'served at the same time to discipline women and contain their demands — and to offer them a vastly new and extended scope for action'.<sup>84</sup> Christian evangelicalism became the vehicle that gave both shape and direction to proto-feminism.

June McKinnon agrees with Olive Banks's s view that 'emotions awakened by the evangelical revival led almost obviously and directly to feminism'<sup>85</sup> by pointing out that 'drunken men inflicted violence, poverty and vice on his helpless family'; thus the temperance and the anti-vice worker were both 'fighting for the protection of all women'.<sup>86</sup> Evangelicalism broke down the barriers of the 'separate spheres ideology' as mentioned earlier. Ryan argues that by the 1860s, the 'cult of domesticity' that dominated the 1830s and 1840s, gave way to public activity as women involved themselves not only in temperance movements but also in charity and church-related work on a large scale (for example, the 'Soldiers' Aid Association', 'Colored Ladies' Relief Association' and, 'ragged schools', ~~etc.~~). These activities wore down the 'separate spheres' ideology because,

...social relations were too various, overlapping, and expansive to be corralled into the enclosed space [of the 'Home']. Neighbours, church brethren or the... benefit association shared warmth and intimacy within a social, rather than a private, sphere...In fact, church, town, and neighbourhood, regularly and with impunity, violated the privacy of the home.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, the 'private sphere', the bounded Home, to which women were confined during the Early Victorian 'cult of domesticity', began to disintegrate or, perhaps more accurately, it expanded to embrace the public sphere. It was precisely because the

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<sup>83</sup> - *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 82.

<sup>85</sup> O. Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*, Martin Robinson, Oxford, 1981, p. 15, cited in McKinnon, "The Women's Christian Temperance Union", p. 15.

<sup>86</sup> McKinnon, "The Women's Christian Temperance Union", p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> Ryan, *Cradle*, p. 234.

wider world intruded onto their homes that middle-class women found it increasingly necessary to venture out of their homes and actively to take part in the 'public sphere' by pursuing campaigns for social reform.

Caine argues that a prime reason for the development of the female social reformer was the middle-class nature of evangelicalism. She explains that,

...the very religious and moral beliefs established by these fundamentalist religions were threatened by the competitive and amoral market in which the middle class earned their living.<sup>88</sup>

The only way to overcome this dilemma, she continues, was to 'ensure that the home could be protected as the basis of a new moral order in which religious piety and family affection were protected'.<sup>89</sup> As a result, Luther's Protestant Family that had the father at its centre in the eighteenth century was transformed and the mother became the 'moral centre' of the family.<sup>90</sup> As women came to be seen as the 'natural leaders and guides' of men 'in religious and moral matters',<sup>91</sup> it was a short step to what Levine called the 'domestication of the public arena'.<sup>92</sup>

Ware pursues a similar line of argument explaining that 'Philanthropy became a legitimate form of activity for women since it allowed them to use their moral and spiritual influence for the benefit of their community'.<sup>93</sup> Both Levine and Ware argue that this realisation was a crucial step in breaking down the 'separate spheres' ideology. Ware asserts that this offered a chance to 'move beyond the private sphere of family into a more public world',<sup>94</sup> while Levine goes even further to suggest that it foreshadowed the 'collapse of the distinction between the two spheres of public and private', and constituted an 'implicit challenge to separate spheres ideology'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 83.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.* Caine asserts that this shift in the 'moral centre' of the family can be detected in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814).

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>92</sup> Levine, *Victorian Feminism*, p. 14.

<sup>93</sup> Ware, *Beyond the Pale*, p. 67.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Levine, *Victorian Feminism*, p. 14.

Carol Dyhouse is, however, sceptical of the range and depth of this ideological change that formed the foundation of women's movements and reform campaigns in the late 19th century. She insists that a very rigid 'sexual division of labour' was maintained throughout the late nineteenth century and women working outside the home were seen as decidedly disrespectable by the middle class and elements of the better-off working class

Dyhouse believes that while the women's 'duty' of caring for children and ailing relatives could, at times, be extended to include 'philanthropy' in the wider society, this nonetheless posed little threat to the separate spheres ideology. Even woman teachers, who were generally single, assertive and 'models' of the 'New Woman',<sup>96</sup> tended to 'mother' their charges in a devoted, self-sacrificing way, regarding their careers as a religious vocation or duty.

Dyhouse contends that even the relatively exceptional, more radical feminists, who attacked the sexual division of labour and who worked towards expanding the 'women's sphere of autonomy in some areas of public and private life' generally 'fell far short' of the 'radical restructuring of family roles and relationships considered essential by the feminist movement today'.<sup>97</sup> For Dyhouse, language and identity were inseparably intertwined and Victorians lacked both the words and the ideas to express what modern writers understand by the term 'feminism':

Social inhibitions shape language, and Late-Victorian culture did not readily supply women with the language which would

<sup>96</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 134. The 'New Woman' was a contested identity which Caine argues had, by the 1890s, developed into a *fin-de-siècle* questioning of many institutions, assumptions and beliefs, particularly those centring on sexuality, marriage and family life. ~~life' life'. by a younger generation of feminists but which still retained elements of 'traditional' ideas of womanhood for the older generation who were less critical of the institution of marriage. The 'New Women' appeared in a range of fiction including Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, Grant Allen's *The Woman Who* ~~Did~~ and George Gissing's *The Odd Women* — in each of these books the heroine rejected marriage.~~

<sup>97</sup> C. Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, (*Girls Growing Up*), — Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981, p. 139.



have facilitated an analysis of their own repression, particularly ...where gender prescriptions govern the -expression of sexuality.<sup>98</sup> [At best, she concludes], ~~the~~... the reformers redefined the Victorian concept of femininity, they did not (in the main) reject it.<sup>99</sup>

Dyhouse's criticism is a powerful indictment of those who propose a 'First Wave' feminism movement. Her critique seems to apply to the white female activists of Krugersdorp who, even at the peak of their power and influence in the town in 1916, never made the transition to what would be understood as feminism today.<sup>100</sup> Cheryl Walker also takes a largely critical view of the nineteenth-century feminists in her study of the campaign for female suffrage in South Africa by observing that most suffragists did not want to upset the sexual division of labour and accepted an essentially 'biologist' view that 'ascribed gender identity to certain inborn differences between men and women'.<sup>101</sup>

Nonetheless the female social reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century should not be judged in terms of twenty-first century hindsight. Rather a degree of empathy, or immersion into the contemporary 'life-world' of these women, is necessary in order to give them their fair due and justly evoke the full value of their achievements.

These women offered analyses of contemporary society that, at times, were remarkably advanced as is apparent once we know and understand what women knew and understood at this point. At the peak of white female activism in Krugersdorp, in 1916, it may have appeared that women were in the process of creating a 'gynopia', to coin a phrase, that is, a town made by women for women. They had reached this point by pursuing three intertwined 'crusades' around temperance, social purity and female suffrage. The following sections will trace the trajectories of these campaigns in detail, culminating in the *annus mirabilis* of 1916.

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<sup>-98-</sup> [ibid.](#), p. 160.

<sup>-99-</sup> [ibid.](#), p. 59.

<sup>-100-</sup> [ibid.](#), p. 19.

<sup>-101-</sup> C. Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement: the pPolitics of gGender, rRace and eClass', in C. Walker

## The Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1909–1913

The year 1909 was a vital year in the campaign for the women's vote in Krugersdorp because, for the first time, a meeting was held in the town to demand the women's franchise. This meeting also brought together all the main women's groups and leading female figures in the town including the Mayoress and the branch Presidents of both the WCTU and SAWF.<sup>102</sup> The presence of the Mayoress was important as it imparted considerable legitimacy to the call for a women's vote among ordinary women who may have otherwise been wary of female activism. She was at the centre of the social life of the town and 'held court' in the form of numerous 'At Home' functions that were well attended by the 'leading ladies' of the town.<sup>103</sup> The SAWF's involvement was also important as it had some success in bridging relations between English- and Dutch-speaking women in the town.<sup>104</sup>

The meeting was described as 'enthusiastic and crowded' and was chaired by Mr J. Young, a popular and dynamic local Assistant Resident Magistrate (ARM) who often presided over large public meetings in the town.<sup>104</sup> His presence on the stage denoted a new respectability for the issue of the women's vote and demonstrated that the campaign had come a long way since the days of local Debating Society motions and had attained mainstream respectability.<sup>105</sup> The women who attended included many of the leading temperance campaigners, suggesting a strong interest in the issue among WCTU members. The 'leading' men identified at the meeting were either current or past Town Councillors. This is indicative of the increasing importance attached to the demand for the women's vote.<sup>106</sup>

The speakers spoke of the 'innate justice' of their cause and how the Transvaal

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(ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1990, p. 337.

<sup>102</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 24 April 1909, 'The Women's Franchise Meeting'.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 April, 1909, 'The Mayoress'.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> - reference

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

could follow the examples of 'their sisters' in Norway, Denmark and Finland in 'joining hands in a great movement to remove artificial disabilities that had been laid upon their sex, principally by man'.<sup>107</sup> These and similar words chosen by the speakers were stronger than the hitherto tame statements that had been made in the past on this issue. Miss Boyle, a guest speaker from Johannesburg, did not mince her words, for example, when she declared that.

Women demanded freedom... to lead lives congenial to themselves. They did not regard themselves as merely wives and mothers...no-one had the right to say what their place in the world was or should be.<sup>108</sup>

Just as increasing interest in women's votes were spurred by the granting of Responsible Government in the Transvaal in 1906–7, so the imminence of Union and looming national parliamentary elections, had placed the female franchise issue squarely back into the public's view. Indeed the National Convention, held in 1909, presented an invaluable opportunity for white women to obtain the vote. Hopes were raised when the Prime Minister of Natal moved that women of 'European descent' should have the vote.<sup>109</sup> ~~It was premature, however, to expect that white women would actually get the vote at this point, for reasons that will be explained later, and The motion was not taken further, however, and~~ the Union was duly formed without female suffrage being secured.

This served only to provoke local women's organisations to work even harder, and on an even broader, national scale to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the attainment of Union inspired similar consolidation plans among women's groups including the formation of the Women's Enfranchisement Associations Union (WEAU) and a Federal WCTU that for the first time included a proposal to attract females of colour

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> See E.H. Walton, *The Inner History of the National Convention of South Africa*, Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1912, p. 306. <sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.* p. 27, see E.H. Walton, *The Inner History of the National Convention of South Africa*, Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1912, p. 306.

to the organisation.<sup>110</sup>

New women's franchise support groups emerged including the Women's Reform Club in Johannesburg in 1911.<sup>111</sup> The focus was shifted to the more attainable goal of the female municipal franchise. Petitions for 'full Municipal franchise' were circulated by the [Women's Enfranchisement League \(WEL\)](#) around the country and 'largely signed'.<sup>112</sup> The WEL branch in Johannesburg ominously supported a motion that 'militant tactics were more conducive than non-militant tactics to the Enfranchisement of Women'.<sup>113</sup>

The Krugersdorp WCTU commemorated the Union and this growing sense of inter-Provincial unity by finally building its planned drinking fountain, referred to earlier, in the Market Square. It was unveiled at a 'colourful and imposing ceremony'<sup>114</sup> suggesting that the local WCTU was learning the art of positive publicity necessary for its future political campaigns around female suffrage. The WCTU, both in Krugersdorp and at a national level increasingly intersected and overlapped with women's groups which campaigned for women's suffrage at both local and national levels.

At a national level many WCTU members were active members of the WEL and there are many examples of petitions and letters in favour of women's suffrage that were written on WCTU [stationery letterheads](#).<sup>115</sup> At least [seventeen](#) out of the [sixty](#) WCTU members identified in *Women of South Africa* (1913) were also WEL

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<sup>110</sup> WCTU, *WCTU*, p. 40. In that year, at the WCTU Convention at Kimberley, Mrs Prescott, the wife of a Wesleyan Minister, helped to found the first 'Coloured and Native Union' with Mrs Prescott as its first President. ~~It was not part of the SA WCTU but an independent movement that affiliated directly to the World's WCTU, see p. 72. A similar union was established on the Rand in 1913 and another in Cape Town in 1915.~~

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>112</sup> Church of the Province of South Africa Archives, University of the Witwatersrand (CPSA), Archives of the Women's Enfranchisement League (WEL), A133, File 1.1 Minutes ~~of the Executive Annual~~, the **Execu Annual**, Half-

Yearly and Quarterly Meetings, 1910–1914, Second Quarterly Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1911, p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83. See also *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 February 1911, 'W.C.T.U. Annual Meeting'.

<sup>115</sup> See, for example, CAD, SABA, Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (PM), 170/2/11, 'Women's Suffrage', Correspondence: Miss Julia F. Solly, Superintendent Franchise Federal WCTU, Cape Town ~~To~~ the Right Honourable General Botha, December, 1911.

members and seven out of the thirty-two women identified as supporting women's suffrage in Krugersdorp in diverse, fragmentary newspaper sources, were also members of the local WCTU branch. The overlap was particularly clear at the leadership level where WCTU leaders were described as 'staunch' supporters of women's franchise (see Appendix One).

A major target for the WCTU and its sister organisations campaigning for the national franchise for women, was the municipal vote which could serve as a 'stepping stone' to the parliamentary vote (an approach that was also used in England).<sup>116</sup> The WEL, to which many WCTU members belonged, sent a deputation to the Transvaal Provincial Council's Select Committee that was appointed to consider changes to the Municipal Draft Act, to demand the municipal vote for women. The deputation handed over the following statement:

We wish to submit to ~~the~~-your Committee that as far as the Municipal franchise is concerned, there is no reason why women should be denied it. The municipal franchise in contradiction to the parliamentary franchise is based almost entirely on a property qualification, the principle underlying the law being that those who pay the rates should also have a say in the spending of those rates.<sup>117</sup>

The statement called for the right of women to stand as Town Councillors, asserting that the presence of women on Town Councils would have a 'beneficial effect' as it would 'raise the tone' of the Council ~~and~~-due to women's 'special knowledge'.<sup>118</sup>

Women Town Councillors could contribute on a wide range of issues: 'hospitals, charitable institutions, libraries, workshops, adulteration of food, dairies, butcheries, bakeries...hours of labour in workshops... factories where girls and children are concerned, the prevention of the spread of contagious and infectious diseases, and generally matters relating to the health of the town'.<sup>119</sup> It enabled the concerned woman, in the words of Emily James of the National Union of Women Workers in

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<sup>116</sup> Hollis, *Ladies Elect*, p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> - CPSA, WEL, A133, 1910-1914, Statement handed in on behalf of the Women's Enfranchisement League to the Select Committee of the Provincial Council, dealing with the Municipal Draft Ordinance, July 4<sup>th</sup>, July 1911, point four.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*

Britain, to 'fence the precipice at the top before she provides an ambulance at the bottom'.<sup>120</sup>

These issues were located firmly in the 'Woman's Mission' in what were considered the 'traditional' sphere for women, that is, health and sanitation, children and nutrition, perhaps as a deliberate strategy aimed at placating the males on the Select Committee. Despite this, the Committee was reluctant to recommend a female municipal franchise<sup>121</sup> and, instead, handed over its report to the Transvaal Provincial Council (TPC) that, in turn, became the WEL's main target. The TPC debated the desirability of a female municipal franchise when it considered the draft Municipal Elections Ordinance of 1912. This debate was closely followed by women's suffrage groups across the Transvaal and a list was published of those members who voted for or against the proposal.<sup>122</sup>

W.G. Holmes, the Labour representative for Krugersdorp and A.V.J. Lockie, a 'Progressive', of Roodepoort, both supported [the](#) female municipal franchise ([see Chapter Eight](#)) as did their English-speaking, urban-based counterparts on the rest of the Rand. Opposition came mostly from Afrikaner rural constituencies<sup>123</sup> who, according to Walker, rejected women's suffrage as part of the 'English Disease' of liberalism and the Dutch Reformed Church cited biblical grounds to argue that the man should be 'head of the family' and condemned female suffrage on these terms.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Hollis, *Ladies Elect*, p. 461.

<sup>121</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5 Miscellaneous, Municipal Elections Draft Ordinance 1912.

<sup>122</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5 Miscellaneous, letter from Secretary WEAU to Honorary Secretary WEL, Johannesburg, 29 October 1912.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.* The letter runs 'I enclose lists showing the voting in the recent debate on the Municipal elections ordinance which I trust our Society will make use of at the next Elections of Provincial Councillors. The members in the list should be opposed by all suffragists.'

<sup>124</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5 Miscellaneous, Municipal Elections Draft Ordinance 1912.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, letter from Secretary WEAU to Honorary Secretary WEL, Johannesburg, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1912.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.* The letter runs 'I enclose lists showing the voting in the recent debate on the Municipal elections ordinance which I trust our Society will make use of at the next Elections of Provincial Councillors. The members in the list I should be opposed by all suffragists.'

<sup>124</sup> Walker, 'The Woman's Suffrage Movement in South Africa', p. 22.

<sup>125</sup> See, for example, *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 5 April 1919, 'Peach Brandy Case'. The article makes it clear that farmers in Hekpoort Valley were allowed to distill peach brandy.

<sup>126</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 January 1912, 'Temperance Convention'.

It ~~should be noted~~ was noted earlier that strong opposition had been expressed against various proposals for a parliamentary franchise for women by Dutch-speaking or 'Afrikaner' MPs from wine-farming districts in the Cape. These men may, understandably, have had an axe to grind against the WCTU's temperance campaign. In this way, the two issues of temperance and female suffrage, at all levels, became intertwined for this powerful political section and permeated to the Provincial levels.

Afrikaner-Boer MPCs from rural constituencies in the Transvaal also represented liquor-producing areas ~~as 'boers'~~ where farmers produced peach brandy and other forms of '~~mampoe'r~~' for commercial sale and private use.<sup>125</sup> The issues of temperance and women's suffrage were, thus, intertwined not only by the women's groups like the WCTU but also by their opponents.

Around about the time the Transvaal Provincial Council debated the issue of female municipal franchise, the National Temperance Convention for South Africa was held in Cape Town over three days under the auspices of the South African Temperance Alliance. Thus, the WCTU and their temperance issue was campaign were given considerable publicity at a time when the issue of women's municipal franchise was being discussed in the Transvaal. The convention's delegates even obtained an audience with General Botha and his wife at Groote Schuur.<sup>126</sup> Given the high profile of this convention and the threat it posed to liquor interests around the country, it may well have been instrumental in generating opposition against women's municipal franchise in the Transvaal in 1912.

All this political activity at a national and provincial level influenced the Krugersdorp

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<sup>124</sup> Walker, 'The Woman's Suffrage Movement in South Africa', p. 22.

<sup>125</sup> See, for example, *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 5 April, 1919, 'Peach Brandy Case'. The article makes it clear that farmers in Hekpoort Valley were allowed to distill peach brandy.

See also van

Onselen, *New Babylon*, Chapter Two, 'Randlords and Rotgut', p. 45.

<sup>126</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 January 1912, 'Temperance Convention'.

WCTU branch to turn its attention more and more away from local issues from 1912 onwards and to concentrate ~~more on~~ increasingly on broadly national campaigns. The branch's meetings reflected this change in focus and were more frequently addressed by the national President of the Union and presidents of other provincial branches than ever before.<sup>127</sup>

Under these increasingly politicised and heated circumstances, moderate women's groups found it increasingly difficult to operate and the Federal Council of the Guild of Loyal Women of South Africa held its final meeting in November 1912. The local Krugersdorp newspaper expressed bitter regret over the demise of the Guild,<sup>128</sup> which it clearly favoured over the WCTU. In a separate article, it noted the decline of British patriotism among Krugersdorp's inhabitants (see Chapter Four),<sup>129</sup> which may have been an oblique reference to the Guild's demise, ~~at least, its local branch~~. There was, in these articles, a hint of ongoing and perhaps increasing insecurity among Krugersdorp's white middle-class males, a sense that traditional values were being abandoned and that female activism was to blame.

In the face of growing male hostility, the Krugersdorp WCTU pressed on with its suffrage campaign and as one of a number of ~~affiliated~~ women's organisations affiliated to the WEAU, it helped to gather signatures for a petition in support of women's suffrage in 1912.<sup>130</sup> Over 12 000 signatures were collected across the Union and presented to the Transvaal Provincial Council. Despite this demonstration of public support and determination, the TPC opposed the extension of municipal franchise to women.

<sup>127</sup> See, for example, *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 24 December 1912, 'W.C.T.U., 'Krugersdorp Branch', 'Annual Meeting'.

<sup>128</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 23 November 1912, 'Guild of Loyal Women', 'Final Meeting'. <sup>127</sup> ~~See, for example, *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 24 December, 1912, 'W.C.T.U., 'Krugersdorp Branch', 'Annual Meeting'.~~

<sup>129</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 1 June 1912, 'No Flags', letter to the Editor. The correspondent remarks that although it was Empire Day, he saw very few Union Jacks around Krugersdorp when he walked around the town, and he could detect none at all on the government buildings. <sup>128</sup> ~~*The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 23 November 1912, 'Guild of Loyal Women', 'Final Meeting'.~~

<sup>130</sup> Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement', p. 34. <sup>129</sup> ~~*The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 1 June 1912, 'No Flags', letter to the Editor. The correspondent remarks that although it was Empire Day, he saw very few Union Jacks around Krugersdorp when he walked around the town, and he could detect none at all on the government buildings.~~



The Johannesburg and Pretoria branches of the WEAU condemned the TPC and the secretary of the WEAU suggested that a letter be sent to the Governor-General.<sup>131</sup> A telegram was sent to this effect and passed on to the Cabinet.<sup>132</sup> At its annual conference, the WEAU asked the WCTU and the WEL to 'co-operate' to canvass MPs to sound out who supported women's suffrage,<sup>133</sup> and the national WCTU strongly endorsed this approach and even suggested that an appeal should be made to the Prime Minister.<sup>134</sup> While there is no direct evidence on the response of the Krugersdorp WCTU to these developments, it seems likely that, given its affiliations and the strong sense of national activism that had been growing within this body, the local organisation would have heartily endorsed these motions.

The growing militancy and radicalism of the local WCTU branch seems to have made Krugersdorp's males increasingly uncomfortable and hostile. At least this is suggested by some of the articles printed in the town's local newspaper. While advertisements portrayed women in terms of domesticity ~~(see Figure 7.3)~~, oblique indications of male anxiety and even hostility were expressed in a number of unusual articles about women. These include a piece on a 'girl burglar' in Switzerland who was 'dressed in men's clothes'.<sup>135</sup> Another article was devoted to the 'proper designation of a lady who takes the chair at a meeting'.<sup>136</sup> Probably the most revealing article told an anecdote of a 'pretty typist' who received the unwanted attentions of her married employer and who 'got her own back' by humiliating him in

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<sup>130</sup> ~~*ibid.*, p. 34.~~

<sup>131</sup> ~~*ibid.* CPSA, WEL, A133.~~ File no. 7, Correspondence, letter from Organising Secretary, Miss Hyett, Pretoria to the Hon.

Secretary, WEL, Johannesburg, 2 September 1912, 2/9/12.

<sup>132</sup> ~~*ibid.*~~, Telegram, acknowledgement of the WEAU's telegram, from Secretary to the Governor General to the Secretary Women's Enfranchisement League, stamped 27 May 1913.

<sup>133</sup> ~~*ibid.*, Volume One, 1909-1917.~~ See also Cape Argus, Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 1913, untitled. See also

~~'Resolutions passed at the First Session'.~~

<sup>134</sup> SAB, PM, 120/2/1911, 'Women's Suffrage', undated letter requesting that Prime Minister, the Right Honourable General Botha to receive a deputation from the WCTU, Cape Province, to discuss the extension of the franchise to women in the Union Parliament.

<sup>135</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 18 January 1913, 'Girl Burglar'.

<sup>136</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 May 1913, 'Lady Chairman'.

front of his colleagues.<sup>137</sup> These articles seem to have conveyed a sense of female encroachment onto a masculine domain with the implication that this was unnatural and threatening.

All around the world women were making inroads into male power and this was made clear not only in newspaper articles<sup>138</sup> but in the campaigns and meetings of women's groups fighting for the municipal franchise. To bolster their support for the female municipal franchise, these groups pointed to a range of states and nations that had granted this right to women, or were soon about to do so, including the United States, Britain, New Zealand (which had municipal suffrage as far back as 1886 and parliamentary suffrage in 1893), Canada, Norway, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland.<sup>139</sup>

Male anxiety was also intensified by the growing militancy of white women's groups campaigning for the municipal suffrage on the Rand who appeared to follow some of the tactics employed by the radical WSPU in England. In 1913, the Johannesburg WEL organised a march where women carried 'great coloured banners'.<sup>140</sup> **Their leader, Mrs Griffiths, told the subsequent gathering that she had been arrested while in England for her militant stand for women's suffrage.**<sup>141</sup>

A Johannesburg newspaper noted, with mocking humour that may have served as a mask for such anxiety, that '...the police were quaking, and sure the plate-glass trembled in its new putty'.<sup>140</sup> Such campaigns eventually bore fruit, however, and in 1913 the Johannesburg WEL was able to proudly announce that,

though the parliamentary vote is still withheld from women, we record with pleasure that women now are eligible to sit on Municipal Councils, whilst, through the alteration of qualification in the recent Municipal Ordinance passed by the Provincial Council, all women over 21 have the Municipal vote.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>137</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 24 February, 1912, 'Revenge', 'A Tip for Typists'.

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, The Standard Krugersdorp, 15 February 1913, 'New York Girl Labour' ~~and The Standard Krugersdorp, 26 June 1913, 'Girl Farmers'~~.

<sup>139</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, Pamphlets, ~~etc.~~, Ida Husted Harper, 'Votes for Women: A World-Wide Review', reprinted from the *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 February 1912, untitled.

<sup>140</sup> ibid., File 4, newspaper cuttings, *Sunday Post*, 12 October 1912, 'Our Suffragettes Active: Last night's meeting: procession down Pritchard street'.

<sup>141</sup> ibid., *Transvaal Leader*, 1913, untitled and only the year provided.

<sup>140</sup> ibid.

<sup>141</sup> ibid.

**Figure 7.3: Adverts depicting women in the *Standard, Krugersdorp*, 1912**

Source: *The Standard, Krugersdorp*.

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This victory taught the lesson that determined public campaigns, at a local and national level, could be successful. This success in gaining female suffrage at the lower levels of government seems to have further politicised the Krugersdorp WCTU ~~still further~~ but in a way that broadened its range of campaigns rather than deepening its focus on municipal politics. This shift may have been guided by the realisation that one goal had been achieved while other problems still needed to be urgently addressed.

Furthermore, it became clear that female participation in municipal elections was likely to be delayed (in practice they were only held the following year, in 1914). In addition, a moral panic broke out over a 'Black Peril' scare over the period 1912-3 and this shifted the attention of female activists towards social purity. A Commission was appointed in 1912 to investigate attacks committed by black males on white women which published its findings in 1913. This seems to have deeply influenced the Krugersdorp WCTU at a formative stage in its development and channelled female activism into a new direction, to control male sexuality.

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<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, File 4, newspaper cuttings, *Sunday Post*, 12 October 1912, 'Our Suffragettes Active: Last night's meeting: procession down Pritchard street'.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, *Transvaal Leader*, 1913, untitled and only the year provided.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*

## The Campaign for Social Purity, 1913–1914

The seeds of concern over social purity may have been planted in the Krugersdorp WCTU as early as 1908 during an earlier 'Black Peril' scare, but it only began to germinate by the time of the second moral panic in 1912. The Krugersdorp branch may also have been influenced by the Cape WCTU which engaged with social purity issues in both 1908 and in 1912. This branch had long campaigned against the Cape's Contagious Diseases (CD) Act that imposed harsh treatment on prostitutes while leaving their male patrons untouched. In 1912, three Cape WCTU women representatives were appointed onto a Parliamentary Commission to investigate the repeal of the CD Act.<sup>142</sup> These campaigns would have been followed by the Krugersdorp WCTU through its affiliation to the national WCTU which dealt with these and related issues such as the raising of the age of consent<sup>143</sup> and ending the 'White Slave Traffic',<sup>144</sup> a widespread belief that young, white girls were deliberately kidnapped and forced into a life of prostitution by those who lived off the proceeds.

Social purity issues were closely linked to alcohol abuse, helping to bridge temperance campaigns with a moral crusade that aimed at curbing male sexuality. The 1913 Commission that investigated alleged sexual assaults on women reported that

the opinion has been expressed by many witnesses that total prohibition of ... liquor throughout the Union [for]... all colours and races alike, is the only effective method of dealing with this question, and that the white races, for the sake of the general welfare, and particularly for the safety and honour of the white woman, should... forego the privileges they now enjoy as consumers of such liquor.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> McKinnon, 'WCTU Cape', p. 159.

<sup>143</sup> This issue was also extensively aired by the well-publicised 1913 Commission and may have breathed new life into the old campaign, see U.G. 39–13, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into Assaults on Women (Report of Assaults on Women Commission)*, Cape Times Ltd., Government Printers, Cape Town, 1913.

<sup>144</sup> CAD, Archives of the Prime Minister (PM), 1/1/252, File 120, 1914, letter from the Secretary of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance to the Prime Minister, 3 January 1914.

<sup>145</sup> *Report of the Assaults on Women Commission*, 1913, p. 17.

The Krugersdorp WCTU did not, however, simply follow the 'Black Peril' script in condemning black sexual assaults on white women. Instead it made a radical leap by targeting white male sexuality. This concern over the immorality of Krugersdorp's white men may have been influenced by widespread outrage that was expressed in the town over two cases involving the sexual abuse of young white females in November and December 1912, respectively.

In the first case, a white married man of about 45 years of age and father of eleven children came under preparatory examination in the local court on a charge of rape of a young white girl who was just eleven years old at the time. The man was a relative and attempted to bribe her silence with sweets.<sup>146</sup> In the other case, a 'professional man' behaved in a threatening manner towards a young white women by following her home at night and by standing at her gate. He was fined ten pounds or one month in jail by the magistrate. This was a heavy penalty given that he had committed no actual crime but the magistrate justified his decision by asserting that 'women could not be insulted in that fashion'.<sup>147</sup> Women packed the courts and the local newspaper gave considerable prominence to both cases.

It was shortly after these two high profile cases that the Krugersdorp branch of the WCTU held its annual meeting in Krugersdorp in 1913. At this meeting it was announced that the branch was going to tackle the issues of sexual assaults on women, pornography and the 'white slave traffic'. All of these were new issues and went beyond this branch's traditional concerns with temperance and women's suffrage. To signal its commitment to this new programme, the WCTU announced that it would form a 'Purity Department'. As many as eleven members volunteered to work in this Department which demonstrates how seriously this issue was taken by members of the local branch of the WCTU.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 9 November 1912, 'Alleged Rape'.

<sup>147</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 December 1912, 'Insulting a Young Woman: Professional Man Convicted'.

<sup>148</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 February 1913, 'Women's Christian Temperance Union: Annual

This new focus did not mean that the WCTU abandoned or played down its temperance campaign. Indeed the issues of temperance and social purity were seen as complementary. This point was emphasised by the President of the WCTU in Krugersdorp who insisted that 'women and mothers' had to intervene to help the children who were growing up in an atmosphere of vice created in the neighbourhoods where this [illicit liquor] traffic is carried on'.<sup>149</sup>

This interest in social purity spread to the Krugersdorp Women's Reform Club, a women's suffrage organisation that appears in the records for the first time in March, 1913.<sup>150</sup> The new organisation adopted a wide range of campaigns that included temperance and social purity. It invited a speaker from the Cape WEL who noted that women had to campaign on a wide number of issues, citing, 'social reforms, drink, social evil, sweated labour, inequalities [and] the poor white labour [problem]'.<sup>151</sup> The emergence of the Krugersdorp WRC signalled that white middle-class women in the town, or at least an activist component, were determined to obtain political power to achieve social reform and this meant campaigning for the national vote for women while using the municipal franchise to achieve local reforms. The following year, 1914, was the first year that women could both stand as candidates for Town Councils and could vote, and it was keenly anticipated.

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Report'.

<sup>149</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 14 February 1914, 'Illicit Liquor Traffic', 'Total Prohibition'. Similar calls were made by the 'Chairman' of the Wesleyan Synod, Theo Schreiner, M L A and William Hosken and the Bishop of Pretoria.

<sup>150</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 15 March 1913, 'Votes for Women'.

Cape WCTU women representatives were appointed onto a Parliamentary Commission to investigate the repeal of the CD Act.<sup>148</sup> These campaigns would have been followed by the Krugersdorp WCTU through its affiliation to the national WCTU which dealt with these and related issues such as the raising of the age of consent<sup>149</sup> and ending the 'White Slave Traffic',<sup>150</sup> a widespread belief that young, white girls were deliberately kidnapped and forced into a life of prostitution by those who lived off the proceeds.

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<sup>146</sup> CAD, Archives of the Prime Minister (PM), 1/1/252, File 120, 1914, letter from the secretary of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, (to which the WCTU was allied through its own enfranchisement leagues) to the Prime Minister, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1914.<sup>148</sup> McKinnon, 'WCTU Cape', p.

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Government Printers, Cape Town, 1913, p. 17.

<sup>148</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 9 November 1912, 'Alleged Rape'.

— Ltd, Government Printers, Cape Town, 1913, p. 47.



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<sup>154</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 February 1913, 'Women's Christian Temperance Union', 'Annual

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### **White WwWomen MmMunicipal CcCandidates, the Female Municipal Suffrage and Social Reform i in Krugersdorp, 1914-1915**

While winning the female municipal franchise was a major achievement for white women's groups like the Krugersdorp WCTU and WRC, it also posed an enormous challenge. White female social reformers quickly had to devise a means to put forward women candidates onto 'tickets', with 'manifestosplatforms' that expressed their 'platform'aims, in time for the first scheduled municipal elections that permitted female candidates and women voters, in October 1914. Election promises had to appeal to women's needs and concerns but the white female electorate constituted a

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Report'.  
<sup>155</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 14 February 1914, 'Illicit Liquor Traffic', 'Total Prohibition'. Similar calls were made by the 'Chairman' of the Wesleyan Synod, Theo Schreiner, M.L.A and William Hosken and the Bishop of Pretoria.

<sup>156</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 March 1913, 'Votes for Women'.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*

minority in Krugersdorp even as late as 1914 and so had to attract male voters in addition to winning most of the female votes. A skilful balancing act was, thus, required in the presentation of female candidates and their ~~manifestos~~ campaign promises.

To assist female municipal candidates, the WEAU held a major Conference in Johannesburg in April 1914, specifically to discuss the election platforms of women candidates.<sup>152</sup> The Krugersdorp WRC took the municipal franchise seriously and sent no less than six representatives, making up the third largest contingent after Johannesburg (eleven) and Benoni (seven).<sup>153</sup> The Krugersdorp delegates included the solidly middle-class Mesdames Beatty, J.L. Edwards, Gem, Morton, Saner and Seehoff. Mrs Gem, for example, was the wife of the Medical Officer of Health and Mrs Seehoff, a Dutch-speaking woman, was the wife of Town Councillor and former Mayor Joseph Seehoff, a well-known local merchant (see Appendix Two).<sup>154</sup>

In the aftermath of the Conference, white women began to mobilise in preparation for the October municipal elections. At this point, important differences emerged between the East and West Rand in the content and substance of their approaches to women's issues. The East Rand appears to have been more militant than the West Rand. For example, the Benoni WEL quoted passages from the suffragette speech in the play 'Votes for Women'.<sup>155</sup> A sense of militancy even crept into the 'Ladies' Page' of the leading local newspaper on the East Rand whose columnist wrote, in an article entitled 'Woman's Power', that

If woman will help woman, whatever her creed, whatever her position, whatever her sin, it would be a marvellous stride to the new millennium.<sup>156</sup>~~159~~

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<sup>152</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5, Miscellaneous, 'List of Delegates', Conference, 6-8 April 1914.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> ~~The East Rand Express~~, 23 May 1914, 'Benoni Women's Enfranchisement League', p. 49.

<sup>155</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5, Miscellaneous, 'List of Delegates' Conference, 6-8 April 1914, Johannesburg, p. 2.

In Krugersdorp, in contrast, the WRC elected as their leader the stolid Mrs van Niekerk who had served for a long time as the president of the local branch of the conservative SAWF. Mrs van Niekerk's style was cautious and moderate. For example, she appealed to the women of Krugersdorp to make use of the 'privilege' of the municipal franchise<sup>157</sup><sup>161</sup> – which has been 'given to every woman' rather than as a right which was wrested from a reluctant Provincial Council by determined women after an arduous struggle. Her speeches were studded with the imagery and phrases of the 'Woman's Mission'. For example, she said that the Town Council was relevant to women because it 'largely affect[ed] housekeeping' as it provided ~~provided~~ light, water and sanitation 'for our homes'.<sup>158</sup><sup>159</sup>

The competing merits of these two different approaches in attracting white female supporters were ~~never~~<sup>ot</sup> tested ~~because in the~~ 1914 because the municipal elections were cancelled by the Administrator of the Transvaal. The reason for this decision was no less than the advent of a World War and the outbreak of the 1914 Rebellion that led to the imposition of Martial Law.<sup>159</sup> The various towns were left to make their own arrangements<sup>160</sup> and most, like Krugersdorp kept the existing Town Council in place as a 'nominated' Town Council<sup>161</sup> though not without protest.<sup>162</sup> Due to this historical quirk, no white women were elected on any Rand municipality and no women were voted for in municipal elections in 1914; it would be another full year before they had another opportunity to do so.

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<sup>156</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 23 May 1914, 'Benoni Women's Enfranchisement League', p. 49.

<sup>157</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 2 May 1914, 'Municipal Franchise: Appeal to the Women'.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *The Star*, 11 November 1914, 'Town Council'. It was proclaimed on 25 October 1914.

<sup>159-157</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 20 June 1914, 'Ladies' Page', p. 17.

<sup>160</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 20 December 1914, 'Notes on Current News', 'The Municipal Elections'.

<sup>161-157</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, Saturday, 2 May 1914, 'Municipal Franchise: Appeal to the Women', letter to the Editor.

<sup>162-159</sup> *ibid.*

~~*The Star*, 11 November 1914, 'Town Council'. Proclaimed on 25 October 1914.~~

~~*The East Rand Express*, 20 December 1914, 'Notes on Current News', 'The Municipal Elections', p. 5.~~

~~<sup>161</sup> *Krugersdorp Public Library, Mayor's Minute*, 1913–4, p. 119 and 1914–5, p. 117.~~

~~<sup>162-</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 20 December 1914, 'Notes on Current News: Nominated Town Councils',~~

The Rand's white women's groups were much better organised by the time that the municipal elections were held in October 1915, the following year. The WEAU appealed to women to 'prove their sense of civic responsibility' by standing as candidates who would work for 'clean government and social reform'.<sup>163</sup> The WEAU also endorsed the principle that women voters should support the women who were candidates 'by giving first preference vote in every case to a woman', in the rather complicated proportional representation system introduced for municipal elections in 1912, ~~'in every case to a woman'~~.<sup>164</sup> Krugersdorp put up four female candidates, only one less than the entire East Rand and only two candidates less than the much larger city of Johannesburg.

The Krugersdorp candidates were Mesdames Marion Alice James and Amy Edwards (Women's Reform Club), Emily Turton Bourne (Independent, for Randfontein ward) and Miss Ethel Judes (Independent).<sup>165</sup> All the candidates were described as housewives apart from Miss Judes who gave ~~as~~ her occupation as 'Mineral Water Manufacturer'.<sup>166</sup> This follows a pattern established across the Rand where virtually all the female candidates were married and not employed in the formal economy. Those women who did work, whether in professions or who had their own businesses, were almost exclusively single. It seems that it was considered as socially unacceptable for middle-class women to work in South Africa as it was in contemporary, Edwardian England.<sup>167</sup>

Mrs James was the president of the local WCTU and the best known of the candidates.<sup>168</sup> She was the only member of a temperance organisation on the whole

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<sup>163</sup> p. 5.

<sup>164</sup> ~~163~~ <sup>164</sup> *The Star*, 5 November 1915, p. 5, 'Municipal Elections: to Women Voters, Appeal by the WEAU'.

<sup>165</sup> ~~164~~ <sup>165</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> ~~165~~ <sup>166</sup> *The Star*, 15 November 1915, 'West Rand News'.

<sup>167</sup> ~~166~~ <sup>167</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> ~~167~~ <sup>168</sup> See Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p. 72.

<sup>169</sup> ~~168~~ <sup>169</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 February 1908, untitled. ~~See Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up, p. 72.~~

<sup>170</sup> ~~169~~ <sup>170</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 November 1915, 'Municipal Elections: Women Candidates'.

<sup>171</sup> ~~170~~ <sup>171</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> ~~171~~ <sup>172</sup> *ibid.*

Rand who stood as a municipal candidate. Why this should be the case, is for reasons that are unclear. On the rest of the Rand a similarly eclectic mix of female candidates was put forward representing associations as diverse as the Rand Social Service League and the Jewish Women's Guild. The East Rand was the only region on the Rand where the Labour Party put up female candidates, one for Benoni and two for Germiston.<sup>169</sup>

The Krugersdorp Women's Reform Club held a tea party in honour of their candidates at the home of Mrs C.B. Saner, who had succeeded Mrs van Niekerk as President.<sup>170</sup> Mrs Saner's husband was the manager of the Luipaard's Vlei and Estates Gold Mining Company M. Co. Ltd. and had been a Town Councillor himself. Mrs Saner's privileged position, like other middle-class women, gave her the time and independence to involve herself in women's issues and the municipal vote. She urged all white women in the town to support the female candidates.

Mrs P.B. Lys, one of the Johannesburg candidates, travelled out to Krugersdorp to address the Krugersdorp WRC. She liberally employed the values of the 'Woman's Mission' by describing the Council as a 'large home' where 'housekeeping' was practised 'on a large scale' and where women belonged because they were 'the proper housekeepers'.<sup>171</sup> She felt that women councillors should focus on certain areas of municipal life that were usually associated with women, notably health and sanitation by ensuring the hygiene of butcheries, bakeries, abattoirs and dairies. Mrs Lys called for the municipal employment of female sanitary inspectors, district nurses and municipal inspectors whose duties would focus on mothers and infants in the town.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*<sup>165</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp, 22 February, 1908.*

*The East Rand Express, 27 February 1915, p. 23, 'East Rand School Board'. Mrs Ulyate does not appear to have been very active as there is no indication of any initiatives that she proposed or seconded nor any policies, and her name is not mentioned in the descriptions of the debates.*

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*

Mrs James then addressed the WRC but appeared unwilling to go much beyond what was considered to be 'women's issues' in talking about the role that female Town Councillors could play. Her comments were focused on issues of sanitation and health, for example, where she pointed out, uniquely among all municipal candidates, that there were slums in Krugersdorp and overcrowding in many houses that endangered the health of the children living in them. Her campaign slogan was suffused with Edwardian values and women's concerns with household budgets:

'Progress with efficiency and true economy'.

Like her fellow female candidates across the Rand, she made no mention of temperance, the national franchise for women or issues associated with social purity. This indicates that these were still sensitive issues, even among women, and had to be left out of manifestos to ensure the election of female candidates.

Mr C.B. Saner, who seems to have been present throughout the meeting, enthusiastically ally endorsed d the female candidates, stating that women councillors would 'not be parties to intrigues and underhand work and would keep clear of party politics in our own Council'.<sup>466173</sup> This statement and the middle-class origins of Krugersdorp's candidates suggest that, like Johannesburg's WMA, the WRC in Krugersdorp would not take a party-political line. In practice this meant that they would associate themselves with the 'Independents' in the Town Council. The 'Independents' were a middle-class slate of Councillors from the local professional and a commercial elite that was ostensibly apolitical yet who broadly supported the 'Progressives' and 'Unionists'. ~~They were also vocal supporters of mining capital (see Chapter Eight).~~

Their 'apolitical' stance would, nonetheless, locate them politically in opposition to the Nationalists and Labourites who took an openly party political line and neither of which put up female candidates in Krugersdorp. In an area where there was large support for these parties, this could spell trouble for these women candidates and may explain their apolitical stance.

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<sup>466</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 6 November 1915, 'Municipal Elections: Women Candidates'.~~

The odds of at least one female candidate being elected onto Krugersdorp's Town Council appeared to be good. Elections had been held earlier in Pietermaritzburg, in the Natal Province that had also permitted women to vote in municipal elections.

Women there had voted enthusiastically and 76% of the women went to the polls compared to 63% of the men,<sup>174</sup> ensuring the election of the only female candidate.

This must have heartened Krugersdorp's female municipal candidates because Pietermaritzburg had a similar profile to Krugersdorp in its history as a 'mosaic' town combining both boer dorp and English settler town (see Chapter Three) and so could serve as a election barometer for candidates in a town with a similar mix of English- and Dutch-speaking residents. However, it should be noted that Pietermaritzburg was a well-established settler town so it had a higher proportion of female voters than any of the Rand towns where sexual imbalances persisted.

A total of 1 647 women were registered as voters in Krugersdorp in 1913, about a quarter of the electorate. By 1915 women made up 2 700 voters out of 7 006 names on the voters roll or well over one-third, but still very much in the minority. This rather dramatic growth represents a real expansion in the number of women who registered as voters as there was no corresponding increase in the total number of women in the town during these two years. This suggests that Krugersdorp's women were becoming politicised and boded well for the female municipal candidates.

### **The 1915 Municipal Election Results on the Rand**

Despite their best efforts, the female candidates were all defeated in Krugersdorp. This contrasts with Johannesburg where four of the six female candidates were elected.<sup>467175</sup> On the East Rand women were incredibly successful and every single

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<sup>174</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 August 1915, 'Woman Suffrage: Well Done, Maritzburg'.

<sup>175</sup> *The Star*, 17 November 1915, 'New Mayor'.

<sup>467</sup> *The Star*, 17 November 1915, 'New Mayor'.



female candidate was elected by a comfortable margin. It is difficult to account satisfactorily for the failure of Krugersdorp's female municipal candidates to be elected when their counterparts were so successful but a few, tentative explanations can be offered.

It would be useful, firstly, to exclude the hypothesis that the female electorate did not vote in adequate numbers. Electoral statistics clearly indicate that the female electorate in Krugersdorp was not apathetic. A total of 4 317 voters of both sexes went to the polls = a 75% poll. While the exact portion of women voters is unknown, a local newspaper attributed the high poll mostly to the 'enthusiastic support received by the ladies' of whom a 'large percentage' voted.<sup>469</sup>~~176~~

It also seems plausible to rule out explicit male hostility to female municipal candidates as a reason for the failure of Krugersdorp's candidates to be elected.

Only one negative article was published on the Rand prior to the elections and that was by a correspondent to a Johannesburg newspaper who claimed that the municipal chambers would be filled with 'heart-rendering tears and sobs' of women Town Councillors whenever their 'pet theories' were challenged.<sup>470</sup>~~177~~ *The Standard, Krugersdorp* gave enthusiastic support to female municipal candidates in the town's elections, so this factor can be ruled out.

It is also safe to assert that Krugersdorp's female candidates ran an enthusiastic campaign and tried their best to be elected. Mrs E.T. Bourne, for example, the Independent female candidate for Randfontein, campaigned on a wide range of issues in an effort to attract a diverse spectrum of voters including 'fair wages' for municipal workers ~~(to appeal to workers),~~ the building of 'suitable roads and

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<sup>469</sup> ~~*Rand Daily Mail*, 15 November, 1915, 'West Rand News'.~~

<sup>176</sup> ~~*Rand Daily Mail*, 15 November 1915, 'West Rand News'.~~

<sup>177</sup> ~~*The Star*, 8 November 1915, p. 8, 'Women Councillors', letter from 'A.A'. The editor felt that the 'correspondent' took an 'unduly prejudiced view' and there was no good reason women could not do 'as good work on a Municipal Council as they admittedly do on hospital and school boards'.~~

<sup>178</sup> ~~*The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 November 1915, 'Mrs. Bourne's Manifesto'.~~

<sup>470</sup> ~~*The Star*, 8 November 1915, p. 8, 'Women Councillors', letter from 'A.A'. The editor felt that the 'correspondent' took an 'unduly prejudiced view' and there was no good reason women could not do 'as good work on a Municipal Council as they admittedly do on hospital and school boards'.~~

pathways' ~~(to attract the votes of middle-class motor car owners) and~~ the provision of district nurses. ~~(to draw the female vote).~~ Her promises went far beyond the usual 'Woman's Mission' policies and, indeed, were broader than the platforms of ~~her~~ many of her male rivals so she could not stand accused of a narrow campaign that was aimed only at women. <sup>174178</sup>

What, then, can account for the failure of female municipal candidates to win election onto the Town Council? One of the problems, it seems is that there were too many female candidates and the relatively small number of votes they attracted were split more or less evenly among them. Under the rather complicated proportional representation system, a target of 347 votes was set as the threshold election onto the Town Council. Female candidates attracted 458 votes in total but these were split among four candidates or an average of 115 votes each. If only a single female candidate contested these elections, she could have been elected.

This may account for the success of female candidates in the smaller East Rand towns like Springs and Benoni where only one female candidate stood in each case. Admittedly Germiston returned two female candidates and four female candidates were elected in Johannesburg, but the electorates there were much larger than Krugersdorp. ~~In a nutshell, too many women stood for elections among too few women voters in Krugersdorp and appealed too consistently, dissipating the meagre votes more or less equally to each of the candidates, rather than concentrating the vote in favour of one candidate.~~

Another factor was the relatively large number of Dutch-speaking residents in Krugersdorp that voted almost entirely for the Nationalist Party candidates. The women voters from this group would have followed their husbands, brothers and fathers in supporting the 'volk', even though the WCTU had done much good work among Burghershoop's women. As the local newspaper put it,

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<sup>174178</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 6 November 1915, 'Mrs. Bourne's Manifesto'. This compared favourably with the narrow promises and concerns expressed in 'Mr. J. Smollan's Manifesto' in the same issue.~~

...the Nats have no boys at the Front and every man, woman and babe in arms, if possible, of that party will vote... [for the Nationalists].<sup>179</sup><sup>172</sup>

Given the prevalence of the 'War Effort' ideology that stressed that women make 'sacrifices' to help the 'boys at the front', the effect of this 'danger' of allowing Nationalists to win seats would have carried particular resonance at this time.<sup>180</sup> It is possible that the newly enfranchised women of Krugersdorp felt that the women candidates were endangering their sons by allowing Nationalists to gain a foothold in their town by splitting the English-speaking vote between male and female candidates. For this reason they may have 'sacrificed' the novice female municipal candidates on the altar of a larger goal, giving primacy, as many mothers and wives tended to do, to their sons and husbands at the expense of their 'sisters'.

Finally, there is some evidence that the controversy that surrounded one of its female candidates, Miss Judes, may have contributed to her failure to be elected. Her religion became a factor in the election and she was told by 'certain voters' that they would not support her candidature 'because she was a Jewess'.<sup>181</sup><sup>181</sup>

In addition, the editor of the local newspaper noted that one of the male candidates, Mr Alexander, had engaged in unsavoury activities and that a 'great majority of the non-Jewish community (and we think the majority of the Jewish ratepayers) are very much dissatisfied with Mr. Alexander's conduct in accepting retainers from his clients'. The article also and felt that the 'intriguing of Messrs Alexander and Friedman [another Jewish candidate] will create an anti-Jewish sentiment in Krugersdorp'. It seems plausible that Miss Judes' candidature was harmed by this sentiment as she

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<sup>179</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp, 21 October 1916, untitled.*

<sup>172</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp, 21 October 1916.*

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.* See also 'Miss Judes' Candidature'.

<sup>173</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp, 6 November 1915, 'Election Notes'.*

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.* See also 'Miss Judes' Candidature'.

received the lowest number of votes overall.<sup>474182</sup>

### ~~Women Town Councillors on the Rand~~

#### White Women Municipal Candidates in Krugersdorp, 1914-1915

It is instructive ~~to~~ briefly to consider what women Town Councillors achieved on the Rand once elected if only as an example of what Krugersdorp was possibly missing by failing to elect female Town Councillors. Mrs Malcolm, for example, secured the appointment of a district nurse for Benoni who dealt with over two hundred 'patients', many of them babies reportedly achieving 'great improvement' in the health and nutrition of mothers and their children in many cases.<sup>475183</sup> She was able to direct the efforts of the Children's Aid Society to many slum families to secure clothes for children. The District Nurse also visited 'all the shops, tea rooms, laundries... where female labour is employed' to inspect the conditions in which women worked and also supervised a 'location nurse' who worked with the black residents.<sup>184</sup>

Across the East and Central Rand, the pressure of female candidates led to improvements in the quality of water, milk and a range of consumable items. This led to a corresponding enhancement of the health of the white residents of these towns, especially the health of children and infants. Despite failing to elect any female candidates, similar reforms spread to Krugersdorp because of the example set by female Town Councillors elsewhere on the Rand, although these reforms were introduced later and did not go as far.

The role of female Town Councillors in spreading these health reforms should not be

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<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> ~~*ibid.*~~, see also 'Miss Judes' Candidature'.

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>175182</sup> The East Rand Express, 5 May 1917, 'Benoni's Health Visitor: What She Has Done'.

<sup>183</sup> The East Rand Express, 5 May 1917, 'Benoni's Health Visitor: What She Has Done'.

<sup>184</sup> The East Rand Express, 5 May 1917, 'Benoni's Health Visitor: What She Has Done'.

<sup>185</sup> See Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p. 100.

<sup>186</sup> For detailed accounts of the reforms introduced by female Town Councilors, see CPSA, *The Woman's Outlook, Organ of the Woman's Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa*, especially August, 1916, p. 6 'Women Councillors' interests' and pp. 10-11.

<sup>476</sup> ~~*ibid.*~~

overstated, however, as trends towards improved health and sanitation had been moving in this direction since the turn of the century in Britain.<sup>185</sup> It seems likely that although pressures emanating from female Town Councillors undoubtedly accelerated rather than initiated this process.<sup>186</sup>

Although more research is needed, there is also some evidence that the advent of women candidates for municipal elections coincided with a tightening of segregation laws on the Rand. There may be a causal relationship between these separate developments as the campaign manifestes promises of many female candidates explicitly called for more stringent control to be imposed over 'houseboys' and female domestic servants (see Chapter Six). Female Town Councillors on the East Rand also recommended that curfews should be applied to black residents which would make it an offence for black people to be on public streets after nine o'clock in the evening (this was already the case in Krugersdorp) and a number of proposals were made to control the access of black residents to municipal parks (see Chapter Six).

The Randfontein Location that was established in 1914, the year that female candidates first stood in municipal elections in most Rand towns, was remarkably oppressive compared to its predecessor, the New Location, established in 1912. Conditions were so bad that black residents elected a delegation to present a number of grievances to a Committee of Inquiry in 1917 (see Chapter Six). Black women considered themselves to be particularly badly treated by Krugersdorp's municipal black 'police boys' who searched them for smuggled liquor. Far from expressing sympathy for their 'black sisters', white female municipal candidates and Town Councillors across the Rand seem to have been instrumental in deepening and broadening their oppression.

While none of the female candidates across the Rand ever explicitly addressed

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~~-See Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p. 100.~~

~~-For detailed accounts of the reforms introduced by female town councilors, see *The Woman's Outlook, Organ of the Woman's Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa*, especially August, 1916, p. 6 'Women Councillors' interests' and pp. 10-11, 'The Municipal Vote'. A~~

temperance, liquor licensing or any other issue associated with alcohol consumption, the example of women Councillors' public activism, nonetheless, may well have inspired a new phase of activism among temperance groups. This culminated in a campaign to turn municipal areas in the Rand 'dry' by successfully voting to prohibit commercial transactions in liquor in special 'Local Option' elections. The campaign marked a remarkable shift in focus for the WCTU and other temperance groups and this 'municipalisation' of the temperance issue may have been inspired by women Town Councillors who demonstrated what could be achieved at the local level.

### Temperance ~~CC~~ampaigns, 1914–1916

If war-time patriotism can be blamed for the failure of female municipal candidates to be elected in Krugersdorp, it was apparently a double-edged sword as it appears to have played a major role in the remarkable success of the local WCTU's temperance campaign in Krugersdorp during the first two years of the 'Great War'. Patriotism and the 'Imperial Matriarchy' of groups like the Guild of Loyal Women was largely irrelevant to the temperance campaign in its earlier years, but suddenly became the touchstone of its success at precisely the time when patriotic fervour was at its height.

When war broke out in Europe in August 1914, it inspired a remarkable series of temperance campaigns and high profile posturing against liquor consumption by leading public figures among all the major belligerents. Perhaps ~~each side believed that it would win God's support or maybe~~ it was the practical realisation that while liquor gave soldiers 'Dutch courage', it also promoted ill discipline and even rampant alcoholism that could undermine the effectiveness of soldiers in battle. Whatever the reasons, it provided a huge fillip for the WCTU's temperance campaign in Krugersdorp.

~~To cite just a few of the more prominent examples:~~ in 1914 Lord Kitchener called ed for British soldiers to abstain from liquor during the war and King George V declared that he would remain teetotal until the war ended. One possible explanation for these

dramatic acts may be the powerful concept of 'sacrifice'. Perhaps, it was reasoned, if young soldiers had to give up their lives on battlefields, it was appropriate for those 'at Home' to make their own 'sacrifices' too in the spirit of the 'War Effort' ideology.

Whatever the reason, ~~t~~The King's actions inspired a great deal of enthusiasm for temperance and, indeed, abstinence in South Africa. All over the Union, temperance organisations congratulated the King for his bold stand.<sup>187</sup> The Krugersdorp branch of the WCTU was swept away on a veritable wave of enthusiasm and launched a competition for school children. They were invited to write an essay on 'Who should follow King George's example of total abstinence? Give six reasons why it should be followed in South Africa'.<sup>188</sup>

Part of the motivation for abstinence came from the realisation that Britain's enemies had also acted to prohibit alcoholic consumption by their troops and the impression that this gave these countries a dangerous advantage over Britain and its allies. For example, German naval and military authorities had banned liquor sales at all ports at frontier districts.<sup>189</sup> Britain's allies curtailed liquor consumption by soldiers and this put pressure on Britain and its Dominions to do the same, e.g. Russia's Czar outlawed vodka and France's government restricted the sale of absinthe. Canada followed suit by banning canteens from training camps and the Melbourne Senate voted to do the same.<sup>190</sup> The Krugersdorp WCTU publicised such information widely among its white residents in the town in the form of pamphlets and posters.

In Krugersdorp and across South Africa, temperance groups distributed 'resolution' cards or 'pledges' among soldiers. These contained Kitchener's message urging troops to adopt abstinence during the war.<sup>191</sup> The Krugersdorp WCTU sent the following poem to the local newspaper, to coincide with the signing of these pledges:

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<sup>187</sup> ~~R~~See, for example, Resolution of the IOGT, Grand Lodge of Western SA, October 1915.

<sup>188</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 26 June 1916, 'Women's Christian Temperance Union'.~~

<sup>189</sup> ~~The Church Chronicle, 11 March 1915, untitled. The Standard, Krugersdorp, 26 June 1916, 'Women's Christian Temperance Union'.~~

~~The Church Chronicle, 11 March 1915.~~

<sup>190</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>191</sup> ~~WCTU, 'A Brief History of the WCTU, p. 11. See also S. Lewis (compiler), An Appeal to our Leaders, pamphlet, undated, stamped 1943, p. 6.~~

They talk of the man behind the gun,/ And the deadly work he has done,  
But much more deadly work by far,/ Is done by the fellow behind the bar.<sup>192</sup>

Temperance campaigners attacked advertisements from liquor companies that urged the public to 'practise patriotism' by buying a bottle of 'brandy for the heroes' (special flat bottles were produced to promote ease of portability and presumably to facilitate concealment).<sup>193</sup> The Krugersdorp WCTU's President wrote a letter to the local newspaper declaring that the abuse of the 'noble sentiment of patriotism' in this way was 'too disgusting for words'.<sup>194</sup> Rather, Mrs James argued, local publicans should demonstrate their patriotism by closing their bars earlier than usual and thus 'lessening the temptation to their customers to drunkenness and excess'.<sup>195</sup>

The local newspaper published an article sent to it by the WCTU on 'The effects of alcohol on work in the Army and Navy' addressed to 'All men serving the Empire'. It was a message from leading military doctors and supported by Field Marshall Roberts that stated that alcohol hampered the soldier's ability to read signals, prevented prompt judgement, spoiled accurate shooting, hastened fatigue, lessened resistance to disease and worsened the effects of the shock caused by wounds.<sup>196</sup>

Krugersdorp's branch of the WCTU supported temperance movements based in South Africa's coastal cities that began to draw attention to the practice of drinking binges by troops on the eve of their embarkation to Europe. This social ritual often led to drunken brawling and public violence.<sup>197</sup> The WCTU's coastal branches succeeded in reducing the hours of many licensed houses by applying pressure on local authorities, for example, in the Wynberg area.<sup>198 477</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 March 1915, 'W.C.T.U.'

<sup>193</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 19 November 1914, p. 364, untitled.

<sup>194</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 February 1915, 'Temperance and the War'.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>477</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 March 1915.<sup>197</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 March 1915, untitled.

<sup>198</sup> CAD, SAB, GG 712, 9/143/6, 'Restrictions on licensed houses in Wynberg Area', Correspondence: reply from the secretary to the Governor-General to Messrs C. and A. Freidlander, Solicitors, Cape Town, 3 April 1917.

<sup>199</sup> CAD, SAB, JUS 367, 1/349/14, Correspondence: Chairman of the social committee of the Church Council and President of the Cape Town and District Social Reform Association to the Governor-



The WCTU's campaign prompted a number of coastal towns to apply the Public Welfare and Moratorium Act for this purpose, despite protests from the Licensed Victuallers' Association.<sup>199</sup> Not content with its success, the national WCTU raised the stakes even further and began to demand that all bars and pubs, including those situated in interior towns like Krugersdorp, be placed 'out of bounds' to all Defence Force members.

The Krugersdorp WCTU wrote to the local newspaper congratulating the military authorities for its recent action in 'prohibiting the sale of liquor to the troops' and stressed that it had been a matter of 'great anxiety' for many parents that their sons would succumb to the temptation of drink. The letter added that a number of young men had been sent back from the camps as medically unfit due to heavy indulgence and asked 'how will their mothers and sisters feel if the facts come to their knowledge?'<sup>480</sup> The writer observed that a letter had been recently penned by a father of two recruits who wrote,

Many fathers are willing to give their sons to take the necessary risks of war, but are not willing to give them to the unnecessary risks of alcoholism.<sup>200</sup>

This appeal to parental sentiments echoed the 'Imperial Matriarchy' conveyed by the Krugersdorp GLW after the South African war. Yet it is remarkable to see how the 'Women's Mission' imagery associated with the Guild was used to achieve a public goal that was largely aimed at imposing severe restrictions on male access to liquor. Masculinity was to a certain extent embedded in fraternal drinking binges where men, isolated from women, would bond. Drinking was a rite of passage into

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General, 16 September 1914.

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*, April 1915, p. 105. source?

<sup>179</sup> CAD, SAB, GG 712, 9/143/6, 'Restrictions on licensed houses in Wynberg Area', Correspondence: reply from secretary to the Governor-General to Messrs C. and A. Freidlander, Solicitors, Cape Town, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1917.

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*

manhood for many of these young men and fathers traditionally would take their adult sons to the pub for their first pint to honour their coming of age. Drinking in an all-male environment was the quintessential masculine activity and the pub was a male inner sanctum.

It was, thus, quite remarkable to realise that white women – many of them young and single – managed to use public activism to challenge men by denying them access to liquor. Yet these men were inducted into the most masculine of institutions, the army, and trained to engage in the most masculine of activities, fighting in a war. The WCTU's wartime temperance campaign produced an extraordinary paradox where young single women, ostensibly the weakest single group in a patriarchal society, dictated increasingly to the most powerful of masculine institutions, the military establishment.

It would not be long before the inevitable male backlash occurred. Australian soldiers became increasingly adept at evading restrictions and obtaining liquor whenever they embarked at South African ports.<sup>201</sup> There were many reports of drunkenness among Imperial troops in the coastal cities and towns as some of the locals provided them with liquor<sup>181</sup> in the spirit of male comradeship.

These indications of mounting resistance did not bode well for the Federal WCTU's most ambitious plan yet, a proposal to hold a 'Local Option' vote in Johannesburg, the largest city on the Rand. Had it been successful, Krugersdorp and other towns on the Rand would have followed suit and many towns in South Africa could have been forced to go 'dry' like the USA during the Prohibition Era.<sup>202</sup> As early as 1914 forty-seven million Americans were already living under prohibition and in 1915

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<sup>200</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 February 1915, 'Temperance and War'.

<sup>201</sup> CAD, SAB, JUS 1/542/16, Chief Magistrate, Durban to Secretary of Justice, 26 June 1916.

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*, Correspondence, Chief Magistrate, Durban to the Secretary for Justice, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1916.

<sup>203</sup> *The Church Chronicle*, 23 April 1914, p. 122.

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 July 1916, 'Illicit Liquor Evil'.

another four states voted to go dry.<sup>203</sup> Temperance campaigners also pointed out that their fellow 'White Dominions' had also moved far on this path, noting that 56% of voters in New Zealand had polled in favour of prohibition forcing the government to allow local option in areas where 55% of the residents favoured it.<sup>204</sup>

One of the reasons that the Krugersdorp branch of the WCTU supported the Local Option campaign was that many of the poorer, mostly Dutch-speaking whites in Burghershoop were turned into criminals when police trapped them selling liquor illicitly to black people as a means of economic survival. Offenders would receive harsh punishments, usually six months in prison. The Reverend Goodwin pointed out that, as Gaol Chaplain in Krugersdorp, he had plenty of opportunity to see how many men and women were there solely due to the illicit liquor traffic.

Mrs Hartley, the newly elected president of the Krugersdorp WCTU,<sup>205</sup> also spoke and declared dramatically that 'Total prohibition should be enforced [on whites] for the benefit of their own race.'<sup>205</sup> This campaign does not, however, seem to have ignited the Krugersdorp white public's imagination and interest,<sup>206</sup> and the attendance at this particular meeting was quite poor.<sup>182</sup> This boded ill for the Citizens' Alliance's campaign for local veto which was due to go to the vote later that year.

The Krugersdorp WCTU made a point of visiting<sup>183</sup> - Boer women in the Krugersdorp gaol who had been convicted of this offence. This was unusual among WCTU branches and is indicative of the branch's long history of involvement in the social upliftment of these women. Indeed the branch noted that they were the 'only branch doing such work' and urged other branches to follow their example.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> See J.C. Burnham, 'New Perspectives on the Prohibition 'Experiment' of the 1920s', *Journal of Social History*, 1, 2 (1968-9), pp. 51-69.

<sup>203</sup> *The Church Chronicle*, 23 April 1914, untitled, p. 122.

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 July 1916, 'Illicit Liquor Traffic'.

<sup>212</sup> *ibid.*<sup>182</sup> -*ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> ~~The practice of 'visiting' was central to the success of many women's philanthropic institutions, see Bradlow, 'LBS', pp. 87 and 92.~~

The local WCTU in Krugersdorp may also have been encouraged by the support given by the editor of the local newspaper. Various articles supported a range of temperance issues, no matter how odd these were. For example, one article argued that wine farmers needed to be provided with alternatives for their grapes other than wine, suggesting that it supported the national WCTU's rather quirky proposition to turn the wine industry into a raisin industry! The newspaper also supported increased excise duties to make cheap Cape brandy, a prime commodity in illicit liquor sales, too expensive for white consumers on the Rand.<sup>207</sup> Given such support for what were rather unusual campaigns, the WCTU Krugersdorp branch's leadership may have reasoned that it could win sufficient support to win a 'Local Option' vote to turn Krugersdorp 'dry'.

The local WCTU branch may also have been inspired to take on this risky campaign by a visit by the Secretary of the World's WCTU. Her presence and her inspiring speech galvanised the women temperance campaigners behind a push for total prohibition.<sup>208</sup><sup>184</sup> The national WCTU's records reported with much enthusiasm that '...much work was [being] done through the Legislation and Petitions Department, especially in connection with the Local Options Bill' which is indicative of such influence.<sup>209</sup>

The Local Option campaign attracted considerable hostility from the Rand's newspapers for reasons that are obvious as one peruses the many large and lucrative liquor advertisements in these newspapers.<sup>210</sup> Unfortunately for the temperance campaigners, a decision was made to run the referendum at the same

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<sup>206</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 March 1916, 'W.C.T.U. Annual Report'.

<sup>207</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 July 1916, 'Illicit Liquor Evil'.

<sup>208</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 8 April 1916, 'WCTU Activities'.

<sup>206</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 March 1916, 'W.C.T.U. Annual Report'.

<sup>207</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 July 1916, 'Illicit Liquor Traffic'.

<sup>208</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 8 April 1916, 'W.C.T.U. Activities'.

<sup>209</sup> WCTU, *The WCTU in SA, 1889–1989*, p. 41.

<sup>184</sup><sup>212</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 8 April 1916, 'WCTU Activities'.

<sup>210</sup> *The Star, Monday, 13 October 1916*, untitled.

time as the municipal elections. Although the vote on local veto was completely separate from the municipal elections, voting took place in the same polling booths to save money and time and this led to considerable confusion on the day set for the referendum, Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1916.

The ~~P~~poll's results were released the following day and they constituted a devastating blow for the cause of temperance on the Rand. *The Star* described the result as an 'emphatic rejection' of 'prohibition'. Polling was, however, low as large numbers of voters refrained from voting altogether on such a controversial issue. Out of a total of 66 372 municipal voters, 37 372 took part, only 9 624 were in favour of Local Option and 23 948 against, a decisive majority of 14 534 against Local Option.<sup>211</sup> The temperance campaigners like the WCTU were ridiculed<sup>212</sup> but their leaders, nonetheless, put on a brave face in their public statements.<sup>213 186</sup>

The defeat at Johannesburg meant that no further attempt would be made for local option in Krugersdorp and other Rand towns at a local level. The Krugersdorp WCTU shifted instead to the national legislature where it supported a private bill introduced by Senator Schreiner in 1916. It was known as the 'People's Direct Veto Bill' that would greatly facilitate future votes to declare regions 'dry'. The motion made it to a Second Reading<sup>214 187</sup> but was buried soon afterwards by a large majority.<sup>215</sup>

The anger felt by men towards the 'meddling' of female temperance campaigners ~~and~~ that led to the defeat of this bill and the earlier Local Option vote, is exemplified

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<sup>211</sup> *The Star*, 26 October 1916, 'Johannesburg's 'Yea' or 'Nay'.

<sup>212</sup> See, for example, *The Star* 13 January 1916, 'WCTU Troyeville' which reported that the WCTU had been 'beaten to a frazzle'.

<sup>213</sup> Mrs Gray wrote: 'in 1916 a Referendum was taken at the time of the Municipal elections regarding Local Option... we lost by a small margin', see WCTU, *The WCTU in SA, 1889–1989*, p. 84.

<sup>214</sup> *Hansard*, 21 February 1917, 'Direct Popular Veto'.

<sup>215</sup> *Hansard*, 26 April 1917, 'Control of the Liquor Traffic', 'Direct Veto Bill in the House'.

<sup>-186</sup> Mrs Gray wrote: 'in 1916 a Referendum was taken at the time of the Municipal elections regarding Local Option... we lost by a small margin', see WCTU, *The WCTU in SA, 1889–1989*, p. 84.

<sup>-187</sup> *Hansard*, 21 February 1917, 'Direct Popular Veto'.

by a poem by 'A South African' published [in 1917](#) in *The Standard, Krugersdorp*. The sentiments expressed in the poem neatly capture male exasperation and bitterness against the female-led temperance campaign in the midst of a war when men were sacrificing their lives in battle:

And now in their tens of hundreds,/ Come the men to fill their ranks,  
And what can we do to show them/ Our love, our pride, our thanks?  
We can't do much (I own it),/ But give them a passing cheer —  
While the real elite beat a shocked retreat—/ Why, they saw one  
drinking beer !

O God, could we show these misers,/ The path that the Anzacs went!  
Could they rest in their beds at night-time,/ Or live in their damned content?  
Could they talk with a sneer of Australians/ When one or two get drunk?  
I'd rather a drunk Australian,/ Than a wealthy Durban funk !

He's a better man than you are,/ You dear teetotal saint!  
You do not drink — you will not fight!/ What wonderful restraint!<sup>216</sup>

The temperance campaign's vast ambition, its promise of victory and its bitter defeat was repeated ~~in almost the exactly the same order and degree with respect to another social reformist goal, that of in the~~ social purity ~~campaign to, particularly its focus on a campaign for raising raise~~ the age of consent and other attempts to curtail aspects of [white](#) male sexuality. The same confidence that expressed a belief that a range of social purity issues would be rapidly addressed during the years 1914–6, matched the belief that prohibition would be soon achieved. Similarly the failure of these campaigns closely paralleled the defeat that temperance campaigners experienced leading to the same bitter disappointment.

### 'White Peril' — [the Campaign Against the Sexual Immorality of White Men](#)

While the 'Local Option' controversy was raging on the Reef a 'Moral Crusade' was launched by the WCTU and other women's groups against white male sexual

<sup>216</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 18 August 1917, 'Australians'. The poem seems to have been locally penned.

<sup>217</sup> See Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 146. ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 18 August 1917, 'Australians'. The poem seems to have been locally penned.~~

immorality. They may have been influenced by Christabel's book *The Great Scourge* and her slogan 'Chastity for Men' that was given prominence by the WSPU in Britain in their campaign against sexually profligate men who infected their wives after contracting venereal disease from prostitutes.<sup>217</sup> A moral panic<sup>218+188</sup> began on the East Rand and spread first to Johannesburg and then to the West Rand. It was sparked when two white men were convicted of an indecent act with some white girls in Boksburg. The magistrate who heard the case remarked that there was a 'fearful state of things so far as regards the morality of the rising generation of Boksburg'.<sup>189+219</sup>

The Mayor stoutly defended his town as being 'neither better nor worse' than towns such as Krugersdorp or Johannesburg. The Rector of Boksburg, however, felt that the 'moral state here is bad' and pointed to no less than four cases where adult white men had committed 'a crime' against young girls in as many months.<sup>191</sup> A week later ~~Speakers, including,~~ a Miss McCarthy — who apparently hailed from Krugersdorp — addressed issues such as the 'White Slave Traffic' and 'Social Purity' at a mass meeting 'for men only' in the town.<sup>192+220</sup>

This moral crusade spread to Benoni where, at a meeting held under the auspices of the Presbyterian and Wesleyan Guilds, the majority voted in favour of the motion that 'living in tropical or sub-tropical counties tends to the deterioration of European character'.<sup>193+221</sup> The WEAU addressed a meeting at Boksburg during this period where it took the opportunity to call for the age of consent to be raised to eighteen

<sup>218</sup> See S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: the Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, Martin Robinson, Oxford, 1980. ~~See Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 146.~~

<sup>188</sup> See S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, Martin Robinson, ~~Place of Publication?~~ Oxford, 1980.

<sup>189</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 20 June 1914, p. 29, 'Justice Ward on Boksburg's Morality'.

<sup>219</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 20 June 1914, 'Justice Ward on Boksburg's Morality'.

<sup>220</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 27 June 1914, 'Boksburg and Social Purity'.

<sup>221</sup> *The East Rand Express* 20 June 1914, 'Are South Africans Deteriorating? What they think at Benoni'.

<sup>191</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *The East Rand Express*, 27 June 1914, p. 47, 'Boksburg and Social Purity'.

<sup>193</sup> ~~*The East Rand Express*, 20 June 1914, 'Are South Africans Deteriorating? What they think at Benoni: Affirmative View carries the vote'.~~

years throughout South Africa from its current age of ~~sixteen years (it was fourteen years in the Transvaal)~~ and sixteen years elsewhere.<sup>194</sup> The Krugersdorp WRC, through its affiliation with the WEAU, ~~is likely to have~~ supported this campaign.

Miss McCarthy then visited Germiston, as the moral crusade moved steadily westwards, under the auspices of the Germiston Presbyterian Women's Association. Speaking as a representative of the YWCA, she promoted 'social purity and light' for the town. She supported the raising of the age of consent to twenty-one years.<sup>222-195</sup> By the end of the year, the campaign had reached Krugersdorp. A large Methodist rally was held in Krugersdorp's Town Hall that warned its audience that the 'social and moral evils of Johannesburg' were already spreading to 'Krugersdorp itself'.<sup>196-223</sup>

Much prominence was given to a local case where a certain Harry Stein was

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Rally.

<sup>221</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp 8 April 1916, 'Local and General'.

<sup>222</sup> ibid., newspaper cutting, *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 August, no year given but context suggests 1916, 'West Rand: Row at Roodepoort: sordid story unfolded at court'.

<sup>223</sup> ibid., letter, Molly Milner, Paardekraal Monument, Krugersdorp to Mrs. Krause, 18 August 1916.<sup>194</sup> ~~The East Rand Express, 18 April 1914, p. 7, 'East Rand Sketches'.~~

<sup>222</sup> The East Rand Express, 5 June 1915, 'Christian Women Workers: Big Germiston Gathering: Miss McCarthy on Social Purity'.

<sup>195</sup> ~~The East Rand Express, 5 June 1915, p. 19, 'Christian Women Workers: Big Germiston Gathering: Miss McCarthy on Social Purity'.~~

<sup>218</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 4 November 1916, 'Great Methodist Enterprise: Krugersdorp's Great Miss McCarthy on Social Purity'.

<sup>219</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 4 November 1916, 'Great Methodist Enterprise: 'Krugersdorp's Great Rally'.

<sup>220</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp 8 April 1916, 'Local and General'.

<sup>221</sup> ibid., newspaper cutting, *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 August, no year given but context suggests 1916, 'West Rand: Row at Roodepoort: sordid story unfolded at court'.

<sup>222</sup> ibid., letter, Molly Milner, Paardekraal Monument, Krugersdorp to Mrs. Krause, 18 August 1916.

<sup>196</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 4 November 1916, 'Great Methodist Enterprise: 'Krugersdorp's Great Rally'.~~

<sup>222</sup> The East Rand Express, 5 June 1915, 'Christian Women Workers: Big Germiston Gathering: Miss McCarthy on Social Purity'.

<sup>223</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 4 November 1916, 'Great Methodist Enterprise: Krugersdorp's Great Miss McCarthy on Social Purity'.

<sup>224</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp 8 April 1916, 'Local and General'.

<sup>225</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5, Miscellaneous, newspaper cutting, Rand Daily Mail, 18 August 1916, 'West Rand: Row at Roodepoort: sordid story unfolded at court'.

<sup>226</sup> ibid., letter, Molly Milner, Paardekraal Monument, Krugersdorp to Mrs. Krause, 18 August 1916.



arrested on a charge of raping a European girl of fifteen years, after he escorted the young girl back from a dance in West Krugersdorp.<sup>197224</sup>

The moral crusade on the West Rand then broadened its attack on white male sexuality to include condemnation of the co-habitation of white men with Coloured or African women. In neighbouring Roodepoort, a case of assault revealed that several white men, including a white ex-convict who had just been released from Krugersdorp Gaol, were living with Coloured women in the town.<sup>198225</sup> Mrs Milne in Krugersdorp wrote to Mrs. Krause, a female member of the Johannesburg Town Council, asking if she knew some 'decent Member of Parliament' who could take up the matter of 'white men living with kaffirs and coloured women'. She said that and she, along with 'hundreds of other white women', would like see the 'same punishment meted out to the man as well as the woman, [as] surely it is the same thing!'<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp 8 April 1916, 'Local and General'.

<sup>198</sup> ibid., newspaper cutting, Rand Daily Mail, 18 August, no year given but context suggests 1916, 'West Rand: Row at Roodepoort: sordid story unfolded at court'.

<sup>227</sup> See Van Onselen, *New Nineveh*, 'The Witches of Suburbia', pp. 1–71. See also N. Etherington, 'Natal's Black Rape Scare of the 1870s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 1, 1988, pp. 36–53.

<sup>228</sup> G. Cornwell, 'George Webb Hardy's 'The Black Peril' and the Social Meaning of the 'Black Peril' in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3, 1996, p. 445.

<sup>229</sup> ibid.

<sup>230</sup> This point is made by Sol Plaatje in 1921, see S. Plaatje, 'The Mote and the Beam: An Epic on Sex- Relationship Twixt White and Black in British South Africa', Pamphlet reprinted in *English in Africa*, 3, 2, 1976, pp. 85–92.

<sup>231</sup> CPSA, WEL, A133, File 4.5, Miscellaneous, Letter, A. Taynton, Secretary of the Women's Enfranchisement League, Johannesburg to the Secretary of Justice, 14 September 1916.

<sup>199</sup> ibid., letter, Molly Milner, Paardekraal Monument, Krugersdorp to Mrs. Krause, 18th August 1916.

'Black Peril' moral panics had broken out several times on the Rand over the previous two decades<sup>227,200</sup>—and Mrs Krause seemed to be hinting at a similar connection between white male sexual liaisons with black women and black sexual attacks on white women. A popular contemporary novel, Francis Bancroft's *Of Like Passions* (1907) depicted the rape of white women by black men as a form of revenge for white men's debauchery with black women.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>201</sup>—Cornwell argues that the novel 'provides a logical link with a *topos* more frequently observed in South African writing of the time: the cautionary tale concerned with the consequences of undue familiarity and consensual sex across the colour line'.<sup>202,229</sup> Thus while the 'White Peril' moral panic reversed the roles of the 'Black Peril' as white women objected to white men having sexual relations with black women,—there was an explicit link between both moral scares.<sup>230</sup> This connection was clearly made by the Johannesburg WEL in its letter to the Secretary for Justice declaring that:

That this meeting is of the opinion that the differential treatment

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<sup>200</sup>—See Van Onselen, *New Nineveh*, 'The Witches of Suburbia', pp. 1–71. See also S. Scott, 'Black Peril, White Rebel—the platteland peril and the 1914 Boer Rebellion', paper presented at the South

African Historical Society, 16<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, University of the Witwatersrand, July, <sup>224</sup> G. Cornwell, 'George Webb Hardy's 'The Black Peril' and the Social Meaning of the 'Black Peril' in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3, 1996, p. 445.

<sup>225</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> This point is made by Sol Plaatje in 1921, see S. Plaatje, 'The Mote and the Beam: An Epic on Sex- Relationship Twixt White and Black in British South Africa', Pamphlet reprinted in *English in Africa*, 3, 2, 1976, pp. 85–92. 1997 and N. Etherington, 'Natal's Black Rape Scare of the 1870s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 1 (1988), **page numbers.**

<sup>230</sup> *ibid.*, Letter, A. Taynton, Secretary of the Women's Enfranchisement League, Johannesburg to the Secretary of Justice, 14 September 1916. <sup>204</sup>—G. Cornwell, 'George Webb Hardy's "The Black Peril" and the Social Meaning of the "Black Peril" in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3 (1996), p. 445.

<sup>202</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> This point is made by Sol Plaatje in 1921, see S. Plaatje, 'The Mote and the Beam: An Epic on Sex- Relationship "Twixt White and Black in British South Africa"', Pamphlet reprinted in *English in Africa*, 3, 2 (1976), pp. 85–92.

accorded to white men and women who live or cohabit with coloured persons is largely responsible for the number of black peril cases in our midst, and strongly urge upon the Government to introduce necessary legislation so that the sexes are equally treated in this respect.<sup>204231</sup>

Parliament's response to the moral crusade against white male sexual immorality was the Girls and Mentally Defective Women's Protection Bill. While it did not deal with inter-racial sexual relations, it did address the campaign concerning the age of consent by seeking the 'protection' of girls under sixteen years of age and 'mentally defective women' from male sexual exploitation.<sup>232</sup> The Minister of Justice resisted calls to raise the age of consent to eighteen years<sup>233</sup> and the Bill was narrowly passed by 65 votes to 50,<sup>234</sup> but with an important clause that it would be a 'sufficient defence ~~to a charge...that the girl at the time...was a prostitute or~~ that the person so charged was under the age of 16 years'.<sup>235</sup>

This provoked much controversy, ~~not on the issue of the underage prostitute, as one would expect, but focussed~~ on the loophole that let boys under the age of sixteen years off the hook if they were found to have engaged in sexual relations with underage girls.<sup>205236</sup> The WEL was disappointed with the inclusion of the clause but it was particularly concerned that the age of consent was not raised to eighteen years.<sup>237</sup> The Krugersdorp WCTU at this point made its one and only reference to the issue as it 'rejoiced over the success of our efforts', noting that while a number of organised bodies of women had fought for this reform, 'the original agitation was

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<sup>204</sup> ~~*ibid.*, Letter, A. Taynton, Secretary of the Women's Enfranchisement League, Johannesburg to the Secretary of Justice, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1916-231 *ibid.*, Letter, A. Taynton, Secretary of the Women's Enfranchisement League, Johannesburg to the Secretary of Justice, 14 September 1916.~~

<sup>205232</sup> ~~Hansard, *House of Assembly Debates*, 23 March 1915, p. 586, 'Girls and Mentally Defective Women's Protection Bill: First Reading' and 7 April, 1914, p. 1838, 'Age of Consent'.~~

<sup>206233</sup> ~~*The Star*, 2 December 1915, 'Parliament', 'The Protection of Girls'.~~

<sup>234</sup> ~~*Statutes*, Act 3 of 1916, 'Girls' and Mentally Defective Women's Protection', p. 6.~~

<sup>235</sup> ~~*Cape Times*, 23 March 1916, 'Girls' Protection Bill'.~~

<sup>207236</sup> ~~*ibid.*~~

<sup>236</sup> ~~*ibid.*~~

<sup>237</sup> ~~CPSA, WEL, A133, Executive Meetings, newspaper clipping, *Rand Daily Mail*, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1916, 'Women's Enfranchisement League: Activities of the past year'.~~

started by the W.C.T.U.',<sup>238</sup> a reference, perhaps, to the longstanding concern of the Cape WCTU with issues around women's sexuality and reproduction.<sup>239</sup>

The limited successes of the social purity campaign, at least as a form of public education, was tempered by the realisation that the age of consent was not raised to eighteen years and that an important loophole was retained for young men to slip through. In this way the social purity campaign's failure mirrored the setbacks experienced by the temperance campaign in the same year. In many ways, the year 1916 marked a turning point when, after a string of successful campaigns, the white female social reformists' movements were no longer able to mould the Krugersdorp public and broader white society along lines that they preferred. It marks, also, the beginning of a major backlash that successfully defeated and demoralised female activism, driving it into the relative obscurity of the home and the 'War Effort' for the remainder of the war. It is the ignominious 'fall' of the social reform movements that will be briefly dealt with in the following and final section.

### **The Decline of Women's Social Reform Movements in Krugersdorp, 1917–1918**

After the Girls and Mentally Defective Women Bill was passed, there was no further campaign around 'social purity' in Krugersdorp and the rest of the Rand for the remainder of the war, although there were ample reasons for activism. For example, concern was expressed in March, 1917, when several concerned-citizens (who appear to have acted as individuals) wrote to the Town Council suggesting a Censor Board be established that could ~~vet~~approve films shown in Krugersdorp's 'bioscopes'.<sup>240</sup> This call was taken up by a local newspaper editor in April, 1917 who condemned children's exposure to adult content in Krugersdorp's 'bioscopes' where 'the sex problem is not infrequently introduced into pictures'.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>238</sup> WCTU, *A Brief History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in South Africa*, Cape Town, Townshend, Taylor and Snashall Printers, 1925, p. 27.

<sup>239</sup> See S. Burman and M. Naude, 'Bearing a Bastard: The Social Consequences of Illegitimacy in Cape Town, 1896–1939', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 17, 3–4, 1991, pp. 373–413, p. 382.

<sup>240</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 31 March 1917, 'Bioscopes and Children'.

<sup>241</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 21 April 1917, 'Bioscopes and Children'. For similar concerns

Yet the WCTU and other women's groups did not become actively involved in the campaign which was likely to be both popular and successful. ~~One~~ Other missed opportunities included a report on lewd photographs of white women that were finding their way into the hands of black men on the Rand and concerns about rising levels of venereal disease and syphilis among black men.<sup>242</sup> A local 'Black Peril' scare co-inciding with an East Rand case<sup>243</sup> and the re-emergence of a 'social evil' in Roodepoort where white men cohabited with black women<sup>244</sup> were two further opportunities. These social purity issues did not make much headway and the overall tendency was for these issues to quickly fade from the public view.

The grim toll of the First World War focused minds more and more on the war itself and various women's campaigns appeared increasingly as a luxury or a grotesque distraction when men were dying in their thousands every day in Europe. As in the case of temperance, female suffrage and women's municipal vote, women's issues faded from the public sphere as the 'War Effort' Ideology came increasingly to the fore and promoted an ideology of 'Imperial Motherhood' instead.

The temperance supporters did not, however, quietly fold and go away after their defeat at a local and national level in the 'Local Option' campaigns. By early 1917, particularly in Krugersdorp, temperance movements regrouped and carried on the fight in new ways by shifting away from overt political confrontation and towards a

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<sup>241</sup> elsewhere see *The Church Chronicle*, 1 June 1916, 'Children and Bioscopes', p. 133. ~~and The East~~

~~Rand Express, 10 March 1917, 'Benoni and Bioscopes'.~~

<sup>242</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 2 February, 1919, 'The Hidden Plague'. See also *Rand Daily Mail*, 3 October 1917, 'Venereal Diseases'

<sup>243</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 12 May 1917, 'Black Brutes Punished', 'White Women's Peril'. See also *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 July, 1918, 'East Rand', 'The Black Peril Sensation'.

<sup>244</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 May 1918, 'West Rand', 'Roodepoort's Social Evil'.

<sup>245</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 7 April 1917, 'Gospel Temperance Mission'.

<sup>246</sup> *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 30 June 1917, 'W.C.T.U.', 'Annual Meeting'.

~~Rand Daily Mail, 11 May 1918, 'West Rand', 'Roodepoort's Social Evil'.~~

less controversial moral stance of 'Gospel Temperance'.<sup>245</sup> -At its annual meeting in the middle of the year, the Krugersdorp WCTU's keynote speaker, Rev. Dunstan, gave 'encouraging words' to the despondent members and pointed out that despite the 'appalling strength of the enemy' he was confident that 'Total abstinence and faith in Christ was sure to win the victory'.<sup>246</sup>

While it failed to secure total prohibition or even Local Option on the Rand, the WCTU still worked hard to curtail the granting of liquor licences. It suffered many humiliating setbacks and defeat during 1917 and 1918 when the Liquor Licensing court in Krugersdorp appeared to give out licences to all the applicants and, indeed, it is difficult to find evidence of an application being rejected. In June 1917 three new liquor licences were granted and the presiding official commented while he was willing to consider the views of the WCTU, he had to apply the law. He added that and if temperance campaigners wanted to 'stop liquor from coming into the Transvaal, they had to turn off the tap', that is, mount an effective campaign at parliamentary level.<sup>247</sup> The WCTU did not even make an appearance at the December 1917 Liquor Licensing Court hearing<sup>248</sup> and seemed to have retreated almost entirely from public prominence in the years that followed.

Serious divisions also developed within the women's suffrage movement across the Rand, partly as a result of its failure to win the national vote for women and this contributed further to the decline of female social activism. When tThe Women's Reform Club of Johannesburg seceded from the WEAU in 1916 because it thought that that parent body was endorsing too many issues, including prohibition, instead

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<sup>246</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 30 June 1917, 'W.C.T.U.', 'Annual Meeting'. There are very few, fragmentary~~  
~~fragmentary sources on the WCTU and related issues in newspaper sources in 1917 and 19~~<sup>247</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 16 June, 1917, 'Liquor Licensing Court'. 48.

<sup>248</sup> ~~The Standard, Krugersdorp, 15 December 1917, 'Liquor Licensing Court'. The Standard, Krugersdorp, 16 June, 1917, 'Liquor Licensing Court'.~~

<sup>249</sup> ~~CPSA, WEL, A133, Minutes of Executive Committee, 14 November 1916. The Standard, Krugersdorp, 15 December 1917, 'Liquor Licensing Court'.~~

of focusing its energies on securing the women's vote.<sup>249</sup> This had the ~~twin~~ effect of weakening both support for the female franchise and temperance at the same time. When the Johannesburg WEL actually protested at the amendment of the Constitution of the WEAU that 'advocated' total prohibition this, too, hurt both causes.<sup>250</sup>

By 1918, when Britain granted the franchise to women, South African white women's hopes were briefly raised, and in April 1919 a motion to remove the sex qualification from the franchise was actually carried by Parliament (44 votes to 42). However, a Bill introduced in 1920 to grant women's franchise did not get past its second reading.<sup>251</sup> Subsequent attempts were made to obtain female suffrage in 1922 and 1923 but were defeated (albeit by small majorities) and white women only obtained the vote in 1930.<sup>249</sup> Walker notes that the WEAU was 'too new an organisation at the outbreak of the war for it to weather the interruption without ill effect' and that executive reports from 1919 to 1921 all mentioned 'continued weakness'.<sup>244</sup> <sup>253</sup>

The conservative backlash against women's suffrage had taken its toll to such an extent that it was possible for a newspaper in Krugersdorp, in 1918, to carry an advertisement that depicted a newly qualified, university-educated woman rejecting the vote as too 'masculine' in preference for a good cup of cocoa with the following words:

So much has been heard of the recent date about the doings of the suffragettes, that the following few words may be excused. The lady to whom these remarks refer is not a muscular, clamorous, would-be voting female; but a lady of delicate health, sweet

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<sup>249</sup><sup>250</sup> CPISA, A133, WEL, Reports, Report of Member of Advisory Board of the WEAU for the Half-Year CPISA, WEL, A133, Minutes of Executive Committee, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1916, accompanying unidentified newspaper clipping dated 12 September 1916.

Ending May 31 1915, p. 3.

<sup>251</sup> Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement', p. 39.

<sup>244</sup><sup>252</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>252</sup> ~~ibid.~~

<sup>253</sup> <sup>242</sup> ~~ibid.~~, p. 37.

<sup>253</sup> ~~ibid.~~, p. 37.

<sup>254</sup> The Standard, Krugersdorp, 8 June 1918, advertisement.

disposition, patient in suffering and unobtrusive. Yet... she wishes her vote recorded...in favour of Van Houten's Cocoa.<sup>254</sup>

**Figure 7.2: A cocoa advertisement in a Krugersdorp newspaper, 1918.**

**Figure 7.2: A Cocoa Advertisement in a Krugersdorp Newspaper, 1918**



**Source: The Standard, Krugersdorp, 8 June 1918. advertisement.**

**Source: The Standard, Krugersdorp, 8 June 1918.**

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<sup>213</sup> **The Standard, Krugersdorp, 12 October 1907, 'A Suffragette'.**



## Conclusion

The women who engaged in social reforms in Krugersdorp embraced a 'dualist' philosophy that drove them to view social reform through the prism of the family.<sup>255</sup> Furthermore, most did not travel far on the road towards personal awareness and growth. They desired a 'better world' without wishing to consider women's emancipation in any meaningful sense. These women's groups, the WCTU and WRC in particular, were 'ameliorative' feminist organisations which sought to achieve 'women's rights' only insofar as they could steadily reform society by raising it to contemporary middle-class moral standards.<sup>244</sup>

Central to this middle-class morality was the concept of the 'Woman's Mission' which, according to Caine, held that the proper place for a woman was in the home where she could provide care, nurturing and comfort to her family. This 'domestic seclusion' underlined women's essential 'inferiority to men' in the eyes of the middle class where women were defined only in relative terms as wives or daughters and where they were expected to subordinate their own interests to that of the family.<sup>256245</sup>

At best the 'reformist' objectives of these women's movements, operating within the 'Woman's Mission' would merely 'ameliorate' the worst aspects of injustice to women, leaving intact the patriarchal system and entrenching the broad subordination of women.

Nonetheless, while the 'woman's mission' served to 'discipline women and contain their demands', it also offered women a 'vastly new and extended scope for action'.<sup>246</sup> Women were seen as the 'moral guardians' of the family and this gave women's movements the opportunity publicly to campaign around issues such as

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<sup>255</sup> McKinnon, 'WCTU Cape', p. 5.

<sup>244255</sup> McKinnon, 'WCTU Cape', p. 5.

<sup>256</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 82.

<sup>245256</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 82.

vice and temperance, by limiting male access to liquor and restricting the more outrageous expression of male sexuality inherited from the 'Wild West' mining town days.

These movements led naturally and inexorably to the politicisation of social reformist organisations and the growing determination to secure the vote for women. The suffrage movement achieved an important victory by obtaining the female municipal vote in 1913<sup>34</sup> and the successful election of female Town Councillors in 1915 provided both an important example or 'dress rehearsal' for the parliamentary vote and also gave many women valuable experience that enabled them to substantially improve conditions for women living in urban areas.

The rapid decline of female social reformist movements in the latter parts of the 'Great War' suggests strongly that these organisations were 'paper tigers' whose 'fair weather' supporters quickly evaporated when these groups were exposed to a conservative backlash during 1917–18. A more accurate interpretation was that these women's groups constituted highly complex and ambiguous social environments that attracted a diverse range of women for a variety of reasons.

Many women, for example, were attracted to the Krugersdorp branch of the WCTU during the war for patriotic reasons, that is, they wanted to ensure that soldiers were able to stay alert, alive and effective on the battlefield to enable the Empire to win the war. Yet they decided to abandon the movement for precisely the same reasons of patriotism when the temperance campaign appeared to be undermining the morale of the 'troops' by causing friction over the 'treating' of soldiers.

Similarly these 'patriotic' women abandoned female municipal candidates when it appeared that it could lead to the splitting of the English vote in Krugersdorp to the advantage of the anti-Empire Nationalists. Even the social purity campaigns may have lost their momentum as female patriots grew uncomfortable over what could be construed as an attack on a section of Krugersdorp's males at a time when another

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<sup>216</sup> *ibid.*

section of Krugersdorp's men were dying in the muddy trenches of France. Patriotism was a double-edged sword that helped female activism up to 1916 and thereafter harmed it.

There were other dimensions to this ambiguity, for example, the whole race issue which was kept bottled up throughout the period under study, may have threatened to boil over from time to time and may have created tensions between women in these social reformist movements, hastening their rapid demise. Some attempts were made to incorporate black women in temperance movements, in Kimberley in 1911 for example,<sup>247</sup> while others, particularly in Krugersdorp, seem to have pushed a segregationist line. This not only kept African women out of the local WCTU branch but actually seemed to make black women targets of harsh campaigns aimed at curtailing black access to liquor.

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This complexity is understandable given that female social reformist movements in Krugersdorp were pioneers in every sense of the word. These female activists had no guide to inform them about what was happening and where they were going. In a real sense, they were making it up as they went along so there is all the more reason to marvel at their courage and to avoid an unfair judgmental approach. It would be ahistorical and unjust to measure them in terms of our own times and more sophisticated understandings of feminism. These were, quite simply, remarkable women, going where no women before them had gone, taking risks and plunging into the unknown with courage and imagination and they helped make Krugersdorp, shaping its social and built environment, the 'flesh and stone', in a real, meaningful sense.

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<sup>217</sup> WCTU, WCTU, p. 72.

<sup>218</sup> ~~WCTU, WCTU, p. 72.~~