

**WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION: ASPECTS  
OF EARLY FEMINISM IN THE CAPE, 1889 TO 1930**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

in the subject of

**HISTORY**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NOVEMBER 1995**

## ABSTRACT.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union of the Cape Colony/Province began in 1889 as an offshoot of an organization founded in the United States. Its leaders included prominent Cape women, while rank-and-file members were middle-class and working-class women of all races.

As its name indicates, the Union dedicated itself to Christian evangelism and to prohibiting the use of alcohol. In these fields it made significant gains. However, its mission at the Cape was broader than strictly religious and temperance issues as Union members came to recognise that their goals could only be attained through empowering women, particularly by way of gender equality and the female franchise. Thus it is argued in this dissertation that the most lasting achievement of the Union at the Cape was its contribution to raising female consciousness against the injustices suffered in a male-dominated society.

## **CONTENTS.**

ABSTRACT	(i)
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	(v)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	(vi)
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1.	13

### THE BACKGROUND TO THE FOUNDING OF THE WCTU IN THE CAPE COLONY.

- 1.1. 1800 to 1889, New Wave Feminism in the United States and the founding of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.
- 1.2. 1829 to 1893, The British Women's Temperance Movement.
- 1.3. 1876 to 1889, Temperance, Evangelism and Philanthropy in the Cape Colony.
- 1.4. The Anglo-American Influence in the CC.WCTU and Dutch women.
- 1.5. 1889 to 1915, Coloured Temperance Societies.
- 1.6. 1889 to 1895, African Temperance Societies.
- 1.7. Young Women's Associations, 1886-1895.
- 1.8. The Organization of the Unions.
- 1.9. Summary of Chapter 1.

### CHAPTER 2

THE LEADERS OF THE CC.WCTU	44
2.1. The Role of Religion.	
2.2. Personal Magnetism and Public Speaking Ability.	
2.3. The Importance of Education.	
2.4. The Contribution of Economic Security.	
2.5. A Liberal Political Background.	
2.6. Male Support and Opposition.	

## CONTENTS.

- 2.7. The Schreiner Family Influence.
- 2.8. Coloured Leadership.
- 2.9. The Influence of Travel.
- 2.10. Characteristics of the Leaders and Effect on the CC/CP.WCTU.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE PASSIVE ASPECTS OF THE TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN. 74

- 3.1. The Commencement of the CC.WCTU Temperance Campaign.
- 3.2. Coffee Houses, Scientific Education Instruction, Mothers' Meetings and Hospital Work.
- 3.3. The Department for Soldiers and Sailors,
- 3.4. The Press Department, Raisin and Grape Drives, and the Anti-Narcotics Campaign.

### CHAPTER 4

#### THE CONTROVERSIAL TACTICS OF THE TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN AND THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT. 103

- 4.1. International Petitions.
- 4.2. Local Petitions, 1889 to 1899.
- 4.3. Municipal Votes, the Light Wines Bill, Act 8 of 1907, Establishment of the Women's Enfranchisement League and School Board Elections, 1899 to 1912.
- 4.4. The Local Veto Bill, the Roos Bill, World War I, Municipal Councils, 1912 to 1920.
- 4.5. American Prohibition, the Roos Bill, The Women's Enfranchisement Bill, Suffrage, 1920 to 1930.

### CHAPTER 5

#### THE PURITY CAMPAIGN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE GROWTH OF FEMINISM IN THE CAPE COLONY. 137

- 5.1. The Start of the Purity Campaign - American and British Women Missionaries, 1889 to 1893.
- 5.2. The CDA - Their Application and Enforcement in the 1890s.

## CONTENTS.

5.3.	Promotion of the Purity Campaign in the Cape Colony, 1892 to 1898.	
5.4.	The Campaign against the CDA, 1894 to 1896.	
5.5.	The South African War and Union, 1899 to 1914.	
5.6.	The Campaign for a wider field of Employment, 1894 to 1925.	
5.7.	The Repeal of the CDA and Campaign for Suffrage, 1916 to 1930.	
CONCLUSION		168
SOURCE LIST		175
DISCUSSION ON SOURCES		190

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

ACVV	Zuid Afrikaanse Vrouen Christelike Vereeniging.
BTWA	British Temperance Women's Association.
CA	Cape Archives, Cape Town.
CC.WCTU	Cape Colonial Women's Christian Union.
CDA	Contagious Diseases Acts.
CP.WCTU	Cape Provincial Women's Christian Union.
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church.
IOGT	International Order of the Grand Templars.
IOTT	International Order of the True Templars.
LBS	Cape Town and Suburban Ladies Benevolent Society.
SAL	South African Library, Cape Town.
WEL	Women's Enfranchisement League.
WEAU	Women's Enfranchisement Association Union.
WCTU	Woman's Christian Temperance Union of America.
WWCTU	World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union.
"Y's"	Young Women's Christian Temperance Union.
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could not have been written without the expert academic advice and moral support of my supervisors, Dr Jane Carruthers and Dr Tilman Dederig. As a student of a distance teaching institution there are difficulties in keeping contact with supervisors, but Dr Carruthers and Dr Dederig answered all queries and returned revised work promptly. Dr Carruthers kept contact telephonically, boosting my fading morale and succinctly answering queries she thought would be better explained verbally than in writing. Both my supervisors, despite their heavy work schedules, generously offered their time unstintingly and most important, were unselfish in sharing their wealth of knowledge in guiding me through this dissertation.

My gratitude must also be expressed to the staff of various institutions, the librarians at Stellenbosch University, the University of Cape Town, The Centre for African Studies of the the University of Cape Town, Dutch Reformed Church Archives, the Secretary at the Women's Christian Temperance Union headquarters in Observatory, and in particular to the always helpful and pleasant librarians at the South African Library and staff of the Cape Town Archives.

To Mrs Hilda Powell, Public Relations Officer of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of the Cape Province, I am deeply grateful for the many interviews, telephone calls and information she supplied. I would also like to thank Dr Elizabeth van Heyningen, Dr Edna Bradlow and Dr Richard Elphick for their advice.

Most of all, together with my supervisors, my most grateful thanks go to my family. My husband, John, who provided

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

coffee, photostats, and emergency transport to the Archives and the South African Library, my son, Jonathan, for teaching me the intricacies of the computer, and my daughter, Chantal, who did the final proofreading, and to all three for their continual love and encouragement. I also appreciate the time and effort expended by my brother, Tony Collins, in printing the examination copies of this dissertation.

I am deeply grateful to the Human Sciences Research Council for awarding me a bursary towards funding this dissertation. The views expressed in this dissertation are my own and do not in any way reflect those of the Human Sciences Research Council.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and in particular to my granddaughter, Alexandra, in the hope that she will benefit from the fight by women in the past for her rights as woman.



## INTRODUCTION.

On 4 June 1889, Mary Clement Leavitt, a missionary of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of America, (WCTU), established the first branch of this organization in the Cape Colony, at Wellington.<sup>1</sup> The contribution of the WCTU to the history of Christianity and women's history, has received recognition in the U.S.A, Canada, Britain and New Zealand, but little has been written about it in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> One of the aims of this dissertation is to remedy in part this deficiency. The WCTU in the Cape Colony was known as the Women's Christian Temperance Union of the Cape Colony (CC.WCTU). After 1910 the CC.WCTU became known as the Cape Provincial Women's Christian Temperance Union (CP.WCTU).

The CC.WCTU was a Protestant organization whose membership was open only to women. The CC.WCTU had three main drives, the Temperance Campaign, the Social Purity Campaign and Evangelism. The Temperance Campaign aimed at ridding society of alcohol, drugs, tobacco and any substance abuse. The basic objective of the Purity Campaign was to equalize the moral standards of a male-ordered society which ruled that women were the "pure" and moral guardians of the home and the community, while men were excused from sexual immorality.<sup>3</sup> Evangelism was

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1. Cape Archives, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to Maggie Allen, June 11, 1889, (V11 is the abbreviation for the Huguenot Seminary Collection. These documents are housed at the Cape Archives, Cape Town, hereinafter referred to as CA).
  2. Richard Elphick, "Writing about Christianity in History: Some Issues of Theory and Method", (unpubl. paper, Conference on People, Power and Culture: The History of Christianity in South Africa, 1792-1992, held at the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 12 to 15, August 1992), p.9.
  3. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, pp.2-4, (A.1696 is the Women's Christian Temperance Union Collection).

## INTRODUCTION.

the driving force of the CC.WCTU. All the work of the CC.WCTU was undertaken with the aim of making as many converts to Christianity as possible. Yet, in the work of the CC.WCTU the achievements of the Temperance and Purity Campaigns dominated those of the evangelical mission work.

Although this organization's ideology and practical works in the Temperance and Purity Campaigns were heavily overlaid with Christian evangelism, the CC.WCTU's greatest contribution has been in the field of advancing feminism. There is also the contrary argument that WCTU involvement in the Temperance and Purity Campaigns showed it to be an ultra-conservative organization seeking by means of a patriarchal religion merely to reinforce women's submissive role in the domestic, social, economic and political spheres. If this were the case the WCTU and thereby the CC.WCTU would have no place in feminist history.<sup>4</sup> However, while not denying the importance of its contribution towards spreading Christianity, this dissertation sets out to demonstrate that the CC.WCTU's most significant contribution in the Cape Colony was towards the attainment of equal rights for women in all spheres.

The concept of feminism covers a broad spectrum of issues, from theory to pacifism and anti-pornography.<sup>5</sup> The meaning of the word "feminism" has also continually changed in history.<sup>6</sup>

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4. Dale Spender, Women of Ideas and What Men have Done to Them, (London, etc., Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p.248, p.262; Liza Tuttle, Encyclopedia of Feminism, (New York, Facts on File Publications, 1986), p.356.
  5. Maggie Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, (New York, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p.X.
  6. Olive Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, 1800-1930, Vol. I, (Brighton, Wheatsheaf Books, 1985), p.vii.

## INTRODUCTION

Even within feminist movements there are differences of opinion.<sup>7</sup> The depiction of feminist values, aims and goals still is a matter of controversy.<sup>8</sup>

However, there are essential concerns that are discussed in feminist theory. One of the most important is "the criticism of the position of women in relationship to man".<sup>9</sup> Feminists must formulate a group protest against gender discrimination.<sup>10</sup> In this respect the CC/CP.WCTU was indeed a women's movement which protested against almost all forms of sexism in the Cape Colony/Province. These included the legal, political, economic, social and educational inequalities suffered by women.

The CC.WCTU realised that to achieve all its goals, it had to obtain the franchise for women. In 1895 the CC.WCTU therefore, founded a Franchise Department "for the purpose of influencing and educating women as to how best they can increase their power and ultimately obtain the vote by ballot".<sup>11</sup> In America, New Zealand and Australia the WCTU was the largest women's organization in the fight for white women's enfranchisement. In South Africa it was the first organized national body of women to campaign for the women's franchise.<sup>12</sup> The CC.WCTU's franchise campaign was for the vote to be granted to educated or

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7. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.75.
  8. Janet Saltman Chafetz and Anthony Dworkin, Female Revolt: Women's Movements in World and Historical Perspective, (Totowa, New Jersey, Rowman & Allanheld, 1986), p.49.
  9. Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, Vol.I, p.vii.
  10. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.74.
  11. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1896, p.13.
  12. Ian Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930, (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p.233.

## INTRODUCTION

property owning White, Coloured and Black women.<sup>13</sup> This advocacy of a limited franchise rather than a universal one was in tune with the times. Even Elizabeth Cady Stanton who formed the National Suffrage Union of America in 1869, and is hailed as one of the first radical feminists, campaigned for a limited immigrant and black vote in America.<sup>14</sup> She was therefore as racist and middle-class in her feminist outlook as the CC/CP.WCTU.

To encourage conservative middle-class women to join its suffrage campaign, the CC.WCTU maintained that the franchise would allow the CC.WCTU a better chance of achieving temperance and social purity goals. As a result of using suffrage as a lever to gain these aims, the WCTU members have been called "reluctant" or "unsuspecting feminists", for whom women's causes were secondary to moral reformation. True feminists are seen as making a distinction between women's causes and women's rights. Women who campaigned to safeguard the family, thereby protecting women's place in the home and society are regarded as campaigning for women's causes in that they reinforced the Victorian male perception that a woman's place was in the home. They did not insist on the right of sexual freedom or choice of employment which, however, was open to men.<sup>15</sup>

"Marxist feminists identify mainly the sexual division of labour as a cause for oppression" and maintain that a true

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13. SAL, (South African Library, Cape Town), Pamphlet Collection, Mary Brown, A Claim for the Enfranchisement of Women in the Cape Colony, 1912, p.8.

14. Spender, Women of Ideas, pp. 248-250;  
Richard J. Evans, The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australia, 1840-1920, (London, Harper & Row, 1977), p.204.

15. Barbara Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in 19th Century America, (Middleton, Connecticut, Wesleyan University, 1981), pp.145-151.

## INTRODUCTION

feminist will also fight for "economic change".<sup>16</sup> The CC.WCTU challenged the division of labour in commerce but not in the home. It therefore falls within the category of an "ameliorative" feminist organization in that women's rights were to be achieved by the reformation of society, by raising it to moral, educational and economic middle-class standards. In this way women would achieve equality.<sup>17</sup> The CC.WCTU regarded motherhood and wifely duties as "a sacrifice willingly taken by the spirit" and the rearing of children "a full time job".<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, the CC.WCTU did recognise that many women were forced to work for economic reasons and campaigned for creches and kindergartens for the children of working women. The more affluent woman was encouraged to use her educational skills in the work place, thereby challenging a wife's economic dependency. The division of labour was therefore questioned to some extent but in the home the role of the traditional housewife was still sacred, men were not exhorted to share in domestic duties.

The leadership of the CC/CP.WCTU always remained firmly middle-class, its desired economy was capitalism and political sympathies were towards Britain. These ideas were more in line with the policies of the founding American WCTU, which disputed British trade in liquor, tobacco and drugs, but in other respects saw America as an extension of the British Empire and kept up a close Anglo-American alliance.<sup>19</sup> Economic change as propagated by the CC.WCTU, was expected to raise the living standards of

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16. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.74.

17. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, p.157.

18. The White Ribbon, April, 1928, p.12.

19. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.213.

## INTRODUCTION.

working-class women. The CC.WCTU perceived this as the only way to achieve equality for all women, but critics have construed it as a middle-class fear that the working class would erode their status.<sup>20</sup> This critique is not totally unjustified. Epstein cites fear of the large "immigrant working-class" in late 19th century America, as one of the reasons for middle-class women joining the temperance movement as immigrants were thought to be heavy drinkers.<sup>21</sup>

It will be argued here that it was by virtue of the middle-class attitudes of the CC.WCTU leadership that feminism was able to take root in South Africa. It is seldom that the most oppressed, (in this case working-class women), are able to start an organised protest. Often it is left to the middle-class who have higher education and the ability to organise co-ordinated group protest.<sup>22</sup> The feminist fight to overcome oppression of women implied that the CC.WCTU crossed the boundaries of race and class. Working-class White and Coloured women and girls were encouraged to join the CC.WCTU and take leadership courses. The problems and the needs of working-class women and girls were championed over those of working-class men.

Frequently the CC.WCTU quest for feminism was more problematic. As a White, English-speaking, Christian organisation the CC.WCTU considered it had a duty to raise "the Native from barbarism to civilization" by educating Coloured and African women. Nevertheless, to the CC.WCTU, Coloured and African women were worthy of the vote and it resented the fact that Coloured

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20. Sheila Rowbottom, Hidden from History: 300 Years of Woman's Oppression and the fight against it, (London, Pluto Press, 1973), p.85.

21. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.90.

22. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, pp.100-101.

## INTRODUCTION

and African men had a limited vote and while their "morally superior" womenfolk who were educated or property owners were not allowed this right.<sup>23</sup> In the Cape Colony the White minority middle-class faced a more complex problem of race and class than in Britain and the United States. Most of the working-class were Coloured and African.

As Christine Stansell points out, the insistence of Marxist feminists in claiming that women's advancement under capitalism can come only from the working-class is to emphasize class above gender, as all women live under a patriarchal system which cuts across class lines (and in the Cape Colony race lines as well). In particular, her argument that many middle-class women achieved success in obtaining women's rights which was for all classes,<sup>24</sup> (and in the case of the CC.WCTU to some extent, all races), will be used to support the case for the middle-class leadership of the CC.WCTU as feminists.

WCTU policies were fraught with internal contradictions, one of which was the strong role that Christianity played in the CC.WCTU. On the one hand, it encouraged Christian women to bond together to fight for a common cause, but on the other it deterred non-Christian women from joining the suffrage campaign. This marred the CC.WCTU goal of "international sisterhood" as WCTU policies came with a particular "cultural and political" message: White, Imperialist, middle-class and above all Christian.<sup>25</sup>

It will be argued, however, that the CC.WCTU realized the

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23. SAL, Brown, A Claim to the Enfranchisement of Women, p.8.

24. Christine Stansell, "The History of the women's suffrage movement in Great Britain and America", Feminist Studies, 6 (1), 1980, pp.65-75.

25. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, pp.82-83.

## INTRODUCTION.

difficulties in this and made a resolution in 1894 to petition for anti-discriminatory "class or religious legislation."<sup>26</sup> In 1908 it established the Women's Enfranchisement League that was open to all creeds.<sup>27</sup>

As well as deterring non-Christians, the Temperance Campaign was also problematic. Particularly in the western part of the Cape Colony, many White and Coloured women (particularly those of Dutch descent) were involved in the liquor industry<sup>28</sup> and membership of a temperance society could have been seen as a threat to their livelihood. Most Dutch women in the Cape, even those not involved with the liquor industry, regarded the CC.WCTU as an Anglo-American imperialistic organization, which was at the time anathema to Dutch political aspirations. The CC.WCTU obtained more support from the Coloured women in the Cape Colony.<sup>29</sup>

African women were particularly drawn to the feminist policy of the CC.WCTU Purity Campaign which propagated one sexual standard for men and women. Although there were differences in African and White ideas of chastity, African communities had a traditional form of chastity for unmarried girls. When the system of migrant labour and growing urbanization began to break down the value of virgin brides, African women increasingly

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26. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 3rd Annual Convention, 1892, pp.40-41.

27. SAL, First Annual Report of the Women's Enfranchisement League, April 8 1908, p.1.

28. Herman Giliomee, "Aspects of the rise of Afrikaner Capital and Afrikaner Nationalism in the Western Cape 1870-1915" in Wilmot G. James and Mary Simons eds, The Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape, (Cape Town, Johannesburg, David Philip, 1989), pp.63-68.

29. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.74.



## INTRODUCTION.

joined societies working for social purity.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, those aspects of the CC.WCTU which in the eyes of modern feminists may seem archaic, such as marriage and motherhood, complied with African traditions and also attracted new members. In the late 1880s, missionaries' wives established large prayer groups in the Eastern Cape.<sup>31</sup> Yet, despite the fact that the ground-work for the CC.WCTU's moral and religious teachings had already been laid there were problems in recruiting African members.

The CC.WCTU's attempt to Westernize African communities by banning traditional dances and the brewing of native beer met with great resistance. African women, however, were drawn to the Christian practice of monogamy and many women sought refuge at mission stations to escape the African tradition of polygyny.<sup>32</sup> In order to attract converts the CC.WCTU had to employ the WCTU policy of sensitivity to other cultures,<sup>33</sup> and made a condition that African members were allowed to brew beer to avoid family quarrels as long as they and their children abstained from drinking the beer.<sup>34</sup>

The Purity Campaign, to which some African women were attracted was one of the greatest claims of the WCTU and the CC.WCTU to feminism. In particular its participation in the

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30. Deborah Gaitskell, "Wailing for Purity: Prayer Unions, African Mothers and Adolescent Daughters, 1912-1940", in Shula Marks and David Rathbone, eds, Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870-1930, (London, New York, Longman, 1982), p.342.

31. Deborah Gaitskell, "Devout Domesticity? A Century of African Women's Christianity in South Africa", in Cheryl Walker, ed., Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1990), p.271, p.255.

32. Nomathamsanqa Tisani, "The Shaping of Gender Relations in Mission Stations", Kronos, 19, 1992, p.75.

33. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.98.

34. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Conference, 1895, p.41.

## INTRODUCTION

repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDA), earns it the claim to being part of feminist history.<sup>35</sup> The Purity Campaign introduced to women in the Cape Colony the concept that they had the right to their own bodies.<sup>36</sup> Taboos in openly broaching the indelicate subject of sex, by females, were broken. In fighting prostitution, the essence of male culture was attacked,<sup>37</sup> as the CC.WCTU opposed the double moral standard which was legalized by the CDA of 1885, and which will be explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

Middle and upper class men were attacked over their exploitation of working class women, who formed the majority of the prostitutes in the Cape Colony.<sup>38</sup> Although the CC.WCTU insisted that women should have sex education, they were not allowed the freedom of sexual experience practised by men to which modern feminism prescribes.<sup>39</sup> The new sexual codes were bound by the authoritarian social rules set by the WWCTU.<sup>40</sup>

Yet, in the Cape Colony these prescribed sexual codes drew women members because it was a means of challenging male dominance whilst remaining within the social boundaries of "respectability". One of the most significant factors in social reform in the Cape Colony was the operation of temperance and purity pressure groups.<sup>41</sup> The CC.WCTU's stood out amongst these

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35. Patricia Hollis, The Women's Movement: 1850-1900, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1979), p.vii.

36. David Pivar, Purity Crusade, (Westport, etc., Greenwood Press, 1973), p.225.

37. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.125.

38. Elizabeth B. van Heyningen, "The Social Evil in the Cape Colony 1888-1902: Prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts", Journal of African Studies, 10 (2), April 1984, p.185.

39. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.225.

40. Ibid., p.267.

41. Van Heyningen, "The Social Evil in the Cape Colony", p.187.

## INTRODUCTION.

pressure groups, as pointed out by Epstein, "What differentiated the WCTU was the attitude it brought to these reforms; in every aspect of the work, it kept uppermost its concern for women, framed in terms of its own understanding of women's interests."<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, despite its middle-class connotations, the CC.WCTU was the first organised group of women who succeeded in creating a larger field of opportunities for women.<sup>43</sup> Even though the results were unequal as regards class and race, the intention was to equalize the standing of women of all races, with that of men.

### Contents of this Dissertation.

The dates in the title, 1889 to 1930, have been chosen to represent the founding of the CC.WCTU in 1889 and the emergence and growth of certain aspects of feminism which culminated in 1930 when White South African women were granted the vote.

Chapter 1 provides an outline of the growth of temperance and purity groups in the United States and Great Britain which influenced the formation of the WCTU in the United States and the CC.WCTU in the Colony.

In Chapter 2 the religious, political, educational and social backgrounds, and personal characteristics of the leadership of the CC/CP.WCTU are analyzed in order to establish how they affected the policies and work of the CC/CP.WCTU.

The Temperance Campaign was a major part of the CC/CP.WCTU's work therefore, the discussion on this Campaign has been divided into two chapters. The CC/CP.WCTU's Temperance Campaign strategies fall into two categories, the passive and the aggressive. Chapter 3 deals with the passive aspects, for

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42. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.125.

43. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.9.

## INTRODUCTION.

example, social and charitable work with the emphasis on motherhood, domesticity and education. The aggressive aspects of this Campaign which involved the CC/CP.WCTU's petitions on temperance, campaigning for women to be elected to school boards and municipal councils, and the Franchise Campaign are investigated in Chapter 4.

The Purity Campaign, which fought for the repeal of the CDA, the raising of the Age of Consent, women to be appointed as prison matrons and policewomen, elected onto hospital boards, an equal standard of sexual morality for men and women and women's suffrage is discussed in Chapter 5.

The Conclusion draws together all the above aspects of the work of the CC/CP.WCTU together and evaluates the contribution that each made to the Temperance Campaign, the Purity Campaign, the awakening of female consciousness, and the attainment of the vote for White women in 1930.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE FOUNDING  
OF THE WCTU IN THE CAPE COLONY.

1.1. 1800 to 1889, New Wave Feminism in the United States and  
the Founding of the Women's Christian Temperance Union

Between 1800 and 1920 women in the West formed pressure groups to fight for women's suffrage, social, economic and political reform, with the emphasis on women's rights.<sup>1</sup> Feminists call this period the "First Wave" feminist movement, of which the WCTU was a part.<sup>2</sup> This movement was not a sudden phenomenon. It was the result of an evolving women's consciousness that methods had to be found to express in public, their critique of gender inequality.<sup>3</sup> The most effective routes to equality proved, (in terms of the time), to be through religion, social purity or moral reform, and temperance campaigns. These three lines of campaign were part of the WWCTU policies<sup>4</sup> brought to the Cape Colony in 1889, by Mary Clement Leavitt.<sup>5</sup>

To understand why this Organization, founded in the United States was successful in a British Colony, the history of the WCTU has to be examined against the historical background of the Cape Colony. By 1889, women in the United States had a record of successful mass protest. Religion played a prime part in this achievement. The Quakers especially encouraged adherents to practice social equality. This included the right to a public life, mainly through preaching and public speaking at religious

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1. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.78.
  2. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.9.
  3. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.115.
  4. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, Morning Session, pp.3-4.
  5. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, Afternoon Session, p.3.

## CHAPTER 1.

gatherings.

A strong religious revival movement amongst women belonging to Protestant church groups, sprang up in the early 19th century in America. Under the umbrella of religion these women fought for "moral reform", which to them included applying the same behavioural norms for both men and women. In the process of these religious and moral revivals, women became indirectly involved in public affairs by way of mission and philanthropic societies in which they often held high ranking posts.<sup>6</sup> Religion thus became a way of addressing women's social status.

Olive Banks draws the conclusion that "in the U.S.A. the emotions awakened by the evangelical revival led almost obviously and directly to feminism".<sup>7</sup> As the religious revival was stronger in the U.S.A. than Britain,<sup>8</sup> women's groups in the U.S.A. had a wider exposure to the strategies which would prove to be the most successful. In the process they developed administrative and other abilities which gave them confidence to join the Abolitionist campaign. Maggie Humm believes that the Abolitionist feminists initiated the first wave of feminism in the 1830s.<sup>9</sup> The abolition campaign was fought largely on moral and religious grounds which drew women who had participated in the religious revival movement. Men were willing to allow their wives and female relatives to participate in a campaign which preserved the image of female moral superiority.<sup>10</sup>

This image was an essential part of the gender and cultural

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6. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.16.
7. Banks, Faces of Feminism, p.15.
8. Ibid., p.19.
9. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.1.
10. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, pp.21-23.

## CHAPTER 1.

class distinction established by 19th century middle-class males, through which they gained more control over females.<sup>11</sup> The newly urbanized, industrialized and wealthy male propagated the view that the ideal place for their womenfolk was in the home. Bound by domestic duties and by the luxury of more servants and leisure time the wealthier women would then offer<sup>12</sup> no threat of competition in business. This resulted in women becoming more and more economically and socially dependent upon men.<sup>13</sup> In return, the pursuit of respectability as women's ultimate goal was thrust upon, and often accepted by them. In this way they became role models for their children and the community as a whole. The male was respectable as long as he was a good provider, donated to charitable institutions and kept his sexual indiscretions hidden.

Men saw themselves as functioning on a rational level, while women were thought by men to be purely emotional.<sup>14</sup> Middle-class women in particular, had to strive for sexual purity. However, their working-class sisters were not held to the same rigid standards of purity, which suited male philanderers. The prostitute, who was generally working-class, could then be blamed for man's lack of moral fibre. It was also averred that prostitution protected society. Men could vent their lust on these lower-class women and thereby safeguard the purity of

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11. Leonore Davidoff, "Class and Gender in Victorian England", in Judith L. Newton, Mary P. Ryan and Judith R. Walkowitz, eds, Sex and Class in Women's History, (London, Boston, etc., Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p.20.
  12. Joan Kelly, "The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory", in Newton, Ryan & Walkowitz, Sex and Class in Women's History, p.260.
  13. Rowbottom, Hidden from History, p.47.
  14. Jean & John Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution, Vol.I, (Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp.68-69.

## CHAPTER 1.

their own "respectable" middle-class women.<sup>15</sup>

The moral failures of men which the new women's organizations addressed included child prostitution, the so-called white slave trade and many other forms of commercialized sex. In this light, female participation in the Social Purity Campaign, in the English-speaking countries was aimed not only at remedying the double standard set by men but also at the protection of prostitutes of any class and age.<sup>16</sup> The female campaigner fought for the protection of herself from venereal disease and the psychological and economic neglect of a philandering husband. Men often used the facade of business and philanthropic respectability to practise double standards. In response, women in the United States in the 1830s and 1840s formed 400 associations of the American Female Moral Reform society to fight sexual hypocrisy.<sup>17</sup>

Mere involvement in the struggle against prostitution was a milestone for feminism. The respectable woman was seemingly innocent of the underworld. Sexual practices were never openly discussed by the middle-class woman. American purity workers therefore breached the barriers of class and culture when protesting against the double standards set by men and "challenged the values of the community at large", as well as changing "aspects of the American sex/gender system."<sup>18</sup>

However, both the evangelical revival and the social purity campaigns were fraught with ambiguities by insisting on a universal moral standard. Women would not be sexually liberated, instead both sexes should be subject to the existing restrictive code

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15. Davidoff, "Class and Gender", p.17.

16. Pivar, Purity Campaign, p.8.

17. Mary P. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks" in Newton, Ryan & Walkowitz, Sex and Class in Women's History, p.168.

18. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks", p.174.



## CHAPTER 1.

applied to women. If women reformers had succeeded, men's freedom of action would have been curtailed but in the process, the prostitutes for whom they were campaigning would also have lost the right of choice. As free love, the conception of children outside of marriage and cohabitation without marriage were also morally unacceptable, all women would be restricted to middle-class moral codes. Moral reformers also emphasized women's role as mother and house-keeper, thereby enforcing the male domination. In this sense women were guilty of trying to keep the status quo.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, women are credited with restructuring the American gender/sex system.<sup>20</sup> Evangelical women revivalists and temperance workers established rescue homes for prostitutes in 1830 and by 1838 The New York Female Moral Reform Society, founded a network of 445 groups, mostly situated in New England which was the stronghold of the Quakers.<sup>21</sup>

Prostitution and the sale of liquor often took place in the same location and many women purity workers thus became involved in the Temperance Campaign and vice-versa.<sup>22</sup> In terms of feminist consciousness temperance workers viewed liquor as a means used by men to abuse the female sex. The drunken man inflicted violence, poverty and vice on his helpless family. By signing a temperance pledge, a temperance worker was fighting for the protection of all women and their homes, publicly giving vent to her resentment over this form of male power and hostility. There were also many men who joined the temperance

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19. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks", p.168.

20. Ibid., p.174.

21. Jane Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860, (London, Macmillan, 1985), p.261.

22. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, pp.109-110.

## CHAPTER 1

movement, most of whom were sympathetic to the plight of women.<sup>23</sup>

The temperance reform movement of the 19th century has been called the major reform movement of that century. Temperance reform is significant to feminism because it drew larger numbers of women to its cause than men. As an extension of the evangelical revival, temperance also dealt with moral reform and appealed to women. In the United States the first temperance societies appeared in 1820.<sup>24</sup> One of the attractions for women was that many societies were run by both men and women, and women had the right to speak in public on temperance reform matters.<sup>25</sup>

Another attraction was that "alcohol abuse was a real problem in 19th century U.S.A and the main victims were the wives and children of male abusers",<sup>26</sup> and it was the middle-class women, whose "husbands were not drunkards", who became the most ardent temperance workers. The inference is that temperance for women participants was a "symbolic crusade" based on class, culture and sex. Middle-class, English speaking American, Protestant women, attempted to gain control over the male working-class immigrants, many of whom were not Protestant or from English-speaking countries.<sup>27</sup> Above all it was a way in which women could display their antagonism towards a male-ruled world in which women had no official voice. At least in temperance societies women were allowed to express the concerns of women, in public.<sup>28</sup>

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23. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, pp.113-114.

24. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, p.23.

25. Richard J. Evans, The Feminists, p.53.

26. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, p.24.

27. *Ibid.*, p.25.

28. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, p.89.

## CHAPTER 1.

Equality in other spheres was denied to women and in 1848 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Louise Mott organised the first American national Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls. A document was drawn up demanding the vote, equality in property ownership, education and employment for women and denouncing the " 'absolute tyranny' of men's rule over women".<sup>29</sup>

One of the chief contributors to the formation of women's temperance societies was the American Civil War. With men away fighting, women temperance workers ran the movement with great efficiency. Then dissatisfied with the way in which men resumed control after the war, women organised a country-wide Women's Crusade. Although in operation for only one year, from 1873 to 1874, this "marked the beginning of the total takeover of the movement by women".<sup>30</sup> The Western United States in the 1870s was flooded with new settlers, farmers, cowboys and miners. In the new towns which sprang up, prostitution, drinking, gambling, crime and violence proliferated and added fuel to the Woman's Crusade.<sup>31</sup>

The Women's Crusade was a watershed because it introduced militancy to female protest. Women smashed liquor bottles, windows and furniture in saloons and physically and verbally assaulted bar-owners and patrons. They also resorted to their religious revival tactics to persecute liquor traders, Frequent mass marches on liquor outlets were organised where they prayed loudly and sang hymns outside and inside saloons, if they could gain entrance, until customers left and owners

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29. Neil Wenborn, The Pictorial History of the U.S.A., (London, Hamlyn, 1991), p.143.

30. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, p.24.

31. Wenborn, The Pictorial History of the U.S.A., pp.157-158.

## CHAPTER 1.

were forced to close the doors.<sup>32</sup> These outbursts started in Hillsboro, Ohio and soon spread to 200 towns in different states.<sup>33</sup>

Whereas the religious groups of the early 19th century were church-centered, the Women's Crusade transformed the women's movement into a secular movement as "its focus of activity shifted out of the church into social reform".<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless the link between temperance and Christianity was never lost and was supported by church societies and missionaries. The Crusade showed that women had a collective power which could be successfully used in a wider field of social reform.<sup>35</sup>

The Women's Crusade in America ended in 1874. Although the Crusade was only temporarily successful, it forced some saloons to close. However, the Crusade could not continue to struggle against legislation which gave liquor traders business licences. Another problem was the informal organization of scattered and various non-affiliated temperance societies. At a meeting held by the leaders of the Crusade, church temperance societies and women delegates from 17 states, at Cleveland, Ohio, between 18th and 20th November, 1874, it was resolved to form a strong cohesive organization with central administrative powers. The result was the formation of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which became known as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).<sup>36</sup>

To begin with, the WCTU continued to campaign against the

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32. Evans, The Feminists, p.53.

33. Dictionary of American History, Vol.V, S-Z. (London, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press and New York, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1940), p.(W)479.

34. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.118.

35. Ibid., p.116.

36. Dictionary of American History, Vol.V, S-Z, p.479.

## CHAPTER 1.

liquor trade in the traditional conservative method of evangelical mission work. However, the turning point came in 1875 when Frances Willard proposed that women lobby for the "Home Protection Ballot" which would give them the right to vote in local elections on "Local Option" laws, which dealt with liquor licences and to campaign for suffrage.<sup>37</sup>

This took the process of secularizing the temperance movement a step further, because Frances Willard wished to politicize the role of the temperance worker. When she became President of the WCTU in 1879, she began a Department of Politics which concentrated on the achieving of national women's suffrage. Women temperance workers in the WCTU had thus moved away from church control, although they never lost sight of their evangelical aims. Under Frances Willard, WCTU focus began to broaden into far more active social and political reform and the personal advancement of women.<sup>38</sup> Throughout her life Willard fought for a higher female education and a system which gave access to employment, self-support and self-esteem. In an era when middle-class young women were groomed for marriage as the only goal in life, she campaigned for full and independent lives for single women. Banks states in Faces of Feminism that Willard was "a feminist before she was a temperance worker".<sup>39</sup> It was a brand of feminism which held to Christian evangelism, temperance and social purity but it drew middle-class women into the WCTU to campaign for suffrage and social reform which would benefit women.<sup>40</sup>

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37. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, pp.117-118

38. Ibid., p.118.

39. Banks, Faces of Feminism, pp.78-79.

40. Ibid., pp.p.78-79.

## CHAPTER 1.

Under Willard's dynamic leadership the WCTU expanded rapidly. In 1879 the membership stood at 27,000 in twenty-four states. By 1883, four years later, the WCTU had a membership of more than 73,000 in forty-two states.<sup>41</sup> Part of the attraction for women was Willard's "Do-everything-Policy" which divided the WCTU into departments of work so that an individual could concentrate on specific areas of interest and talent. Departments included the traditional "woman's work" - the Kitchen Garden Department, which taught cookery, (with the emphasis on nutrition); the Flower Mission which gave flowers to hospitals and invalids at home; Temperance mission work; and the Department of Scientific Instruction which taught the negative effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs on the body and society.<sup>42</sup>

More innovative and controversial were the Departments of Suffrage, Relation of Temperance to Labour, (which campaigned for better working conditions for women and children in industry), and the Politics Department which encouraged women to work for the National Prohibition Party's election.<sup>43</sup> With the addition of these departments, Willard infused the WCTU with a sense of commitment to women's interests and allied the WCTU to the "first wave" feminist movement.<sup>44</sup>

To this end Frances Willard persuaded the WCTU to associate itself with international women's organizations. These included the British and Continental General Federation for the Abolition of Vice.<sup>45</sup> Close ties were also established with

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41. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, pp.110-120.

42. Ibid., p.124.

43. Ibid., pp.124-125.

44. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.9.

45. Ibid., p.195.

## CHAPTER 1.

the British Women's Temperance (BTWA).<sup>46</sup>

The WCTU also created an international organization of its own. Mary Clement Leavitt was its first emissary. She left San Francisco on 15 November 1884 and travelled the world for eight years visiting the Hawaiian Islands, Australia, New Zealand, China, Siam, Straits Settlements, Burma, India, Ceylon, Mauritius and Madagascar. In 1889 she came to Natal, the Orange Free State and the Cape Colony.<sup>47</sup> By the time she returned home in 1891, Leavitt had founded WCTU Unions in five continents "making the WCTU an international force in temperance and women's movements."<sup>48</sup> Many of these Unions were established in British Colonies. It is interesting to note that although there was a similar flourishing women's temperance society in Britain, the BTWA, and existing church and other women's temperance societies in these colonies, it was the American women's temperance movement which came to dominate women's societies in British Colonies.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.2. 1829 to 1893. The British Women's Temperance Movement.

In contrast to the American temperance movement, its British counterpart never became as great an avenue for women who aspired to public roles,<sup>50</sup> despite the many strong American influences on and similarities to the British temperance movement. From 1830 women became involved in the running of mixed gender societies. British women temperance workers also allied themselves to humanitarian and evangelical causes and British Quakers were very

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46. Lilian Lewis Shiman, Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England, (Houndsmill, etc., Macmillan Press, 1988), p.248.

47. The White Ribbon, March, 1989, 95 (1), p.3.

48. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.1.

49. *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

50. Shiman, Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England, p.185.

## CHAPTER 1.

active in temperance work.<sup>51</sup>

However, despite the religious revival in Britain during the late 18th and early 19th centuries amongst women's groups, it was weaker than its counterpart in the U.S.A. American women's religious fervour ran high, according to Banks, resulting in the founding of many mission societies and the launch of moral reform campaigns which raised female consciousness and led them "obviously and directly towards feminism".<sup>52</sup> In Britain the raising of female consciousness occurred far later, and this was through the purity campaign. Work amongst prostitutes began in a small way in 1843 and only gained momentum under the leadership of Josephine Butler and Ellice Hopkins in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>53</sup> Butler's campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Act (CDA) focused for the first time on the issue of "the status of women at law" and attacked the sexual "double standard" of Victorian society.<sup>54</sup>

Between 1864 and 1869 the British Government passed a series of Contagious Diseases Acts. These specified that any known or suspected prostitute be subjected to enforced regular examinations by an army doctor, in order to keep venereal disease under control. Thus these Acts did not protect the female prostitute but her male client. If infected with disease the woman could be prosecuted and kept in hospital until she was cured. None of these penalties applied to her

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51. Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872, (London, Faber & Faber, 1971), p.102, pp.174-175.

52. Banks, Faces of Feminism, pp.14-15.

53. Ibid., pp.16-17.

54. Hollis, Women in Public, p.viii:  
Glen Petrie, A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler, (London, Macmillan, 1971), p.85.



## CHAPTER 1

male client.<sup>55</sup>

In 1876 the British Women's Temperance Association was founded. At the time of its inception and under United States influence it focused on temperance. After a visit to the U.S.A., Margaret Parker, a British temperance campaigner, was so inspired by the work of the women's temperance societies that she suggested that a national women's society be founded in Britain. In the same year, E. D. Stewart (or Mother Stewart), brought new enthusiasm to British women campaigners touring Britain in 1876 encouraging women to take a "greater role" in the temperance campaign.<sup>56</sup> The Woman's Crusade made a great impact on Margaret Parker and prompted her to start international missionary work along the same lines. In 1878 a Union of the Woman's Crusade was founded in Port Elizabeth in the Cape Colony and in 1881 a similar mission began in India.<sup>57</sup>

This inter-change of Anglo-American ideas eventually damaged the BTWA. At first, the organization grew steadily as a national united organization, by 1892 it had 45,000 members and 577 affiliated branches throughout England. However, Lady Somerset (who was president that year), proposed that the BTWA adopt the WCTU "Do-Everything-Policy." This caused a massive split in the BTWA as many members were not prepared to campaign for suffrage and aspects of the purity cause which they considered too feminist and which would attract "strange characters to the organization."<sup>58</sup> The extremely conservative members therefore closed opportunities for women to expand

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55. Petrie, A Singular Iniquity, p.65, p.234.

56. Shiman, Crusade against Drink in Victorian England, p.183.

57. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.22.

58. Shiman, Crusade against Drink in Victorian England, p.186.

## CHAPTER 1.

personally in directions of their choice.

One of the reasons for this dissension was that there was far more male opposition in Britain to women assuming public roles than there was in America. British women themselves were also at fault. Particularly in the north of England, strong religious convictions induced women to fight for temperance. However, the more feminist aspects of the WCTU campaign met with resistance, because a struggle for suffrage and against prostitution was regarded as not "respectable".<sup>59</sup>

Rigid English class divisions also exacerbated the debate. Lady Somerset's upper-class opinions were regarded with suspicion as being out of touch with the majority of women, who were working-class.<sup>60</sup> Even middle-class British women were far more reserved than their American counterparts and shrank from any venture that might destroy their public image of respectability. This issue of class is one of the factors in the success of the American WCTU because the great majority of its members shared a middle-class background. American women expressed a national characteristic of "Amazonian assertiveness" which led them to attempt new ventures, which was lacking in most British women because of a more restrictive society.<sup>61</sup> Despite the split in the BTWA, Lady Somerset continued to fight for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, the upliftment of prostitutes and the Ellice Hopkins campaign for raising the Age of Consent.<sup>62</sup> This campaign complemented Josephine Butler's work in attempting to stop child prostitution.<sup>63</sup> The Age of

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59. Shiman, Crusade against Drink in Victorian England, p.186.

60. Ibid., p.185.

61. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.16.

62. Shiman, Crusade against Drink in Victorian England, p.186.

63. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.105.

## CHAPTER 1

Consent was the legal age at which a female child could be legally declared to be a sexually consenting adult. In 1893, this was set at 12 years old and women purity campaigners considered this far too young and an encouragement to child prostitution.

There were no Contagious Diseases Acts in the U.S.A but the WCTU supported Lady Somerset in keeping this issue in the BTWA's purity campaign. In contrast to the BTWA's problems, the WCTU Purity Campaign had become the biggest drawcard for enrolling members. In the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s purity became the foremost campaign in America attracting "women at a rate unprecedented by any other reform in the WCTU history."<sup>64</sup> The WCTU and the BWTA were closely connected through a common language and social culture. The leaders of both organizations, Frances Willard and Lady Somerset, were close friends and supported each other's campaigns for many years thus fostering an image of an Anglo-American alliance.<sup>65</sup>

### 1.3. 1876 to 1889, Temperance, Evangelism and Philanthropy in the Cape Colony.

Anglo-American co-operation on temperance, social purity and evangelistic missions found acceptance in the British Cape Colony in 1889, especially amongst English-speaking women, many of whom were familiar with the workings of temperance philanthropic, evangelic and temperance societies had a long history in the Cape Colony. A pamphlet by the New British and Foreign Temperance Society, dated 1836, invites "persons wishing to join ... to go sign books at the Mission House,

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64. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.116.

65. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, pp.28-33.

## CHAPTER 1.

Church Street", and pamphlet No.3, 1836, supplies information on Juvenile Temperance Work.<sup>66</sup>

The Journal of the Independent Order of the Grand Templars, (IOGT), also a temperance society, in 1878, records that "the post of Grand Secretary was held by Mrs E. D. Bradley". There were 55 lodges as far afield as the "Diamond Fields" and Grahamstown, where "Sister Schreiner" and "Sister Bradley", respectively, started Juvenile Lodges to stop children drinking.<sup>67</sup> This widely spread organization also had origins in the United States - in Utica, 1851. By 1889 it had branches in Canada, Great Britain, Scandanavia, Australia, India, South America, West Africa and South Africa.<sup>68</sup>

Temperance was a topical subject in the Cape Colony in the late 19th century. The Cape Argus and The Cape Times in 1888 and 1889 devoted regular monthly columns to temperance society meetings and activities.<sup>69</sup> These societies gave women the opportunity to speak in public. The Cape Times (8 May 1889), reported on a meeting of the Wesleyan Institute, where papers prepared by "ladies" were read out which "compared favourably to those of the Lords of Creation which were equal if not superior".<sup>70</sup>

The Cape temperance societies were run by men and women. There were also societies only for women. The Women's

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66. SAL, New British and Foreign Temperance Society, No.3, 1836.

67. SAL, Independent Order of the Grand Templars Collection, Journal of Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of South Africa, June, July, 1876, p.1.

68. Micropaedia Britannia, Vol.II, (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1986), p.622.

69. The Cape Argus; The Cape Times, 1888-1889.

70. The Cape Times, May 8 1889, p.3, col.3.

## CHAPTER 1.

Crusade Union was established by the BTWA in Port Elizabeth in 1878,<sup>71</sup> (referred to above) and a Women's Christian Temperance Union started in 1884 in Woodstock, Cape Town, by Mrs<sup>72</sup> Denholm.<sup>73</sup> Temperance work was therefore not new to women of the Cape Colony, nor were societies whose membership consisted exclusively of women.

The oldest women's society in the Cape Colony, was the Ladies Benevolent Society (LBS), which was founded in 1822.<sup>74</sup> At the height of the philanthropic movement at the Cape and in Britain there was a strong element of Christian philanthropy in this Society begun by women mainly from Evangelical churches who helped "the needy, aged and sick persons regardless of colour, of class or creed". The co-founder was Jane Philip, wife of Dr John Philip, Superintendent of the London Missionary Society, and minister of the Congregational Church, Cape Town. In 1842, more than half the committee members belonged to the Congregational Church.<sup>75</sup> The Society received assistance throughout the 19th century from the evangelical movement comprising of women from all Protestant denominations.<sup>76</sup>

The LBS included many of the principles the WCTU was to employ. Education was a priority, and a School of Industry for girls was established in 1824. Literacy was taught but

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71. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.22.

72. It has not been possible to find the initials or the first names of many of the women mentioned in this dissertation, because of the lack of information on Victorian women.

73. The Cape Times, May 11 1889, p.3, col.3.

74. CA, A.1733, (55), Cape Town and Suburban Ladies Benevolent Society, Some Facts concerning the Cape Town and Suburban Ladies Benevolent Society 1822-1922, p.1.

75. Edna Bradlow, "The Oldest Charitable Society in South Africa: One Hundred Years and More of the Ladies' Benevolent Society at the Cape of Good Hope", South African Historical Journal, 25, 1991, p.80.

76. Ibid., pp.83-84.

## CHAPTER 1.

above all the means for employment, which was needlework.<sup>77</sup> Visiting the sick and needy and fundraising for charity were important aspects of the LBS work. Edna Bradlow stresses the importance of these voluntary duties and comes to the conclusion that these women were not merely indulging their middle-class, privileged consciences but were performing an extremely necessary service.<sup>78</sup>

There was no medical aid, unemployment or disaster relief funds for the poor and in Cape Town the ravages of conditions endured by the unemployed former slaves - smallpox, measles, diseases caused by their insanitary slum dwellings,<sup>79</sup> tuberculosis and economic recessions<sup>80</sup> - were all ministered to by the LBS. This Society therefore established that there was a need for women in the Cape Colony to participate in public life. Besides the benefit they offered to the community, members of the LBS themselves acquired administrative, organizational and public relations skills, as well as a sense of female independence. This sense of independence was demonstrated in 1868 when, owing to a financial crisis, male advisers attempted to take over the running of the LBS. Members resisted this attempt, accepted advice from the men and solved their own financial problems. Middle-class Capetonian women, by the mid-nineteenth century, had therefore begun to develop a sense of confidence in their ability. Nonetheless they were still far from "first wave" feminism.<sup>81</sup>

Amongst the ranks of the LBS, there were none who were willing to transgress the line of "respectability" of the

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77. Bradlow, " 'The Oldest Charitable Society' ", p.85, p.96.

78. Ibid., p.92.

79. Ibid., pp.79-80.

80. Ibid., pp.94-95.

81. Ibid., pp.100-104.

## CHAPTER 1.

lady", by becoming involved in the seedier world of prostitution. Nor is there any record of their organizing any protest against the Contagious Diseases Acts, which by and large, affected the "needy" class of girls to whom they were ministering. Thus until 1889 when the CC.WCTU was founded there was no organised attempt by women to join the "new wave" feminist protest against the CDA.<sup>82</sup>

The CDA had been in force since 1868, when the LBS made it's independent stand in the financial crisis. The Cape Colony was affected by the CDA which were applicable in the military garrison and navy-seaport towns. There were eight districts in the Cape Colony in which the CDA operated but surprisingly the only outcry against these discriminatory Acts came in the 1870s from a man; Saul Solomon, the liberal-minded owner of The Cape Argus.<sup>83</sup> Women in the Cape Colony first reacted to the CDA only in 1891 under the CC.WCTU, inspired by the visit of the WWCTU missionaries, Elizabeth Andrew and Dr Kate Bushnell.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly, while U.S. and British women had reached the point of fighting for suffrage and various other women's rights, until the advent of the WCTU there was no cohesive group in the Cape Colony involved in these causes. As far as temperance work in the Cape was concerned, there were several women's church societies involved but they never amalgamated to form a communal force. The only national women's organization to precede the WCTU was the predominantly Dutch-speaking Den Vrouwen Zending Bond formed in March 1889. This society was

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82. Van Heyningen, "The Social Evil in the Cape Colony", pp.178-180.

83. Ibid., p.174.

84. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, pp.2-3.

## CHAPTER 1

orientated towards women only in the sense that it set out "to preach (Christianity) to heathen women and children".<sup>85</sup>

The origins of Den Vrouwen Zending Bond can be traced to the Huguenoten Zending Vereeniging, founded in Wellington in 1878 by two American missionaries, Anna Bliss and Abbie Ferguson. This association offered female missionaries moral, financial and material support and training. Den Vrouwen Zending Bond continued this work, but took it a step forward by amalgamating with other women's missionary societies in South Africa.<sup>86</sup> This appears to have been the first attempt by Cape women as a group to form country-wide and international bonds with other women.

This step came when Mrs Denholm of Cape Town visited America where she met Frances Willard and Lady Somerset. On her return to the Cape Colony in 1884 she started a local WCTU in Woodstock, (referred to above). Some five years later the WCTU had opened a coffee/reading room, (as an alternative to a bar), which proved fairly popular. Competition amongst temperance societies was intense but the new WCTU thrived, and even offered assistance to the ailing Blue Ribbon Society to boost its membership.<sup>87</sup>

Yet despite this local success, when Mary Leavitt of the WWCTU arrived in Cape Town in 1899 she was disappointed in the Woodstock branch. She called it a "small work" and considered it far too locally contained because no attempt had been made to initiate a colonial organization or even to

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85. A. H. Spijker, De Geschiedenis van den Vrouwen Zending Bond: 1889-1908, (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia Drukkerij, 1906), p.6.

86. Ibid., p.5.

87. The Cape Times, May 11 1889, p.3., col.3.



## CHAPTER 1.

affiliate to overseas branches or the American WCTU.<sup>88</sup> By this time Mrs Denholm had renamed her society, The Women's South African Temperance Association and concentrated on temperance only. She did not involve her members in the wider scope of the "Do-Everything-Policy" of the WCTU.<sup>89</sup>

Helen Stakesby-Lewis, the "Sister Schreiner" of the IOGT, (referred to above), formed a Women's Christian Temperance Union in the 1870s. Despite the name this society was not connected to the American WCTU and concentrated on temperance and evangelism. The only international link was with the Women's Temperance Prayer Campaign.<sup>90</sup> In contrast, one of the strengths and the attractions of the WCTU was its "Do-Everything-Policy", which did not limit women to the narrow field of temperance.<sup>91</sup>

Despite these activities, visits from international women temperance leaders were rare. Accordingly, Mary Leavitt's arrival in Cape Town and her subsequent lecture tours in the city and its environs were given considerable publicity. Before her first lecture, The Cape Times exhorted the public to attend, because she was "a highly educated and refined Christian lady" who spoke in a "musical" voice without attempting to "stir" the "emotional nature" of the audience.<sup>92</sup> As can be appreciated, the reporter recognized Leavitt's

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88. Frances Stapleton, A History of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, (Cape Town, Stewart Printing, 1939), p.8.

89. The Cape Times, August 23 1889, p.3, col.3.

90. Eric Rosenthal, Southern African Dictionary of National Biography, (London, New York, Frederick Warne, 1968), p.358.

91. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.121.

92. The Cape Times, May 27 1889, p.3, col.7.

## CHAPTER 1.

"respectability" which would make her acceptable to the middle-class Capetonian. Common male perception at the time was that women were incapable of speaking without histrionics, and her lectures would therefore appeal even to the "reasoning" male mind.<sup>93</sup>

Leavitt's tour in South Africa began in Durban in 1888 and the three first Unions in South Africa were started in Natal. The Orange Free State was not as responsive and her only success was in Harrismith, near the Natal border of Natal, formed mainly because of Mary Gray, the American wife of a prominent Presbyterian minister. Leavitt admitted that she was only preaching to the converted, "everything was done for me and the work".<sup>94</sup>

Leavitt did not go to the South African Republic. But by 1891, Mary Gray had moved to Pretoria, and during the tour of the WWCTU missionaries, Dr Kate Bushnell and Elizabeth Andrew in that year, the first Transvaal Union was formed with Gray as president <sup>95</sup>

### 1.4. The Anglo-American influence in the CC WCTU and Dutch Women.

The women of South Africa who were initially attracted to the WCTU were therefore Protestant, predominantly English-speaking, middle-class and of British or American descent. The Cape Colony, as the oldest and largest British colony in South Africa, responded to Mary Leavitt by forming eight Unions in towns with a high population of English middle-class, such as Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Queenstown and Cape Town, or those

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93. Davidoff, "Class and Gender in Victorian England", p.20.

94. The White Ribbon, March, 1989, 95 (1), p.79.

95. Ibid., 96 (1) & (2), March and June 1990, p.79.

## CHAPTER 1.

with a large number of resident missionaries, such as Wellington and Kimberley.<sup>96</sup>

In 1889 the divisions between English and Dutch colonists were already well entrenched. The Afrikaner Bond had been formed to further Afrikaans culture. English-speakers of the time were seized with a new injection of Imperialism, which antagonized Dutch-speaking colonists. The CC.WCTU was therefore not an attractive organization for Dutch-speaking women.

Those few who did join, like Miss Spijker, were often drawn by the missionary opportunities it offered. Of Dutch descent and involved in Den Vrouwen Zendings Bond, Spijker was appointed Superintendent of the evangelical work amongst Coloured people for the CC.WCTU. She was invaluable to the CC.WCTU, as she often translated documents into Dutch in a drive to recruit more Dutch-speaking members.<sup>97</sup>

Temperance was not a cause especially espoused by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), which was divided on the issue of temperance. The Reverend Andrew Murray of the DRC was a lone temperance and women's rights supporter. A firm believer in higher education for women he founded the Huguenot Seminary for Girls.<sup>98</sup> The first CC.WCTU union was established at Wellington at this school on the 4 June 1889.<sup>99</sup> Emma Murray, his wife, was a leader in the CC.WCTU throughout her lifetime, particularly in the controversial Purity Campaign. The Murray family were not typical DRC people, Murray was of Scottish

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96. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

97. Ibid., p.74.

98. Geo. P. Ferguson, The Builders of Huguenot, (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, Ltd., 1927), p.5.

99. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.6.

## CHAPTER 1.

descent, the daughter of a wealthy English-speaking Cape Town business man and philanthropist, H. E. Rutherford. <sup>100</sup> Although there were strong connections between Scottish and Afrikaans church people, it was Emma Murray's background which made her amenable to temperance causes. The DRC in the Transvaal resisted temperance work regarding it as an English preoccupation. <sup>101</sup>

As will be explained in detail in Chapter 4, a "heated controversy" arose within the DRC in the Western Cape and also between the Church and the wine farmers over the question of total abstinence in the 1800s. The Synod of the Cape Colony became involved and decided that "Wine is a good gift from God to be received with gratitude and to be used to his glory". <sup>102</sup> Thus were the Dutch-speaking wine farmers appeased.

### 1.5. 1889 to 1915. Coloured Temperance Societies.

The "Coloured" community also had problems in espousing the cause. In the Western Cape, Coloured labour in the wine producing districts was the backbone of the industry. Whilst men worked in the vineyards, the majority of women were employed as domestic servants on farms. The CC.WCTU observed that membership of a temperance society for Coloured women therefore would "present special difficulties in the way of servants and employees becoming members". <sup>103</sup> The CC.WCTU did not want to be the cause of anyone losing her employment.

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100. J. du Plessis, Het Lewen van Andrew Murray, (Cape Town, De Zuid Afrikaanse Bijbelvereeniging, 1920), p.179.

101. Tyrrell, Women's World/Women's Empire, p.73.

102. J. du Plessis, The Life of Andrew Murray in Southern Africa, (London, Edinburgh, New York, Marshall Bros, 1920), p.363.

103. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, p.39.

## CHAPTER 1.

In 1875 the IOGT had established a separate temperance society for Coloureds, the International Order of the True Templars, (IOTT).<sup>104</sup> The IOTT had a large following and as women were given equal status, there were many women members. The CC.WCTU had a policy of non-interference in the work of other temperance societies and decided to offer its support and merely provide outlets not available in IOTT strategies. The CC.WCTU decided that the best method of attracting Coloured women without risking confrontation with their families and employers, was to start Gospel Temperance Evenings. These women's meetings succeeded in drawing a fairly good response in Stellenbosch and Wellington, the centre of the wine producing farmlands. Bands of Hope were started for the children, which were similar to Sunday Schools.<sup>105</sup>

Opportunities for the growth of female consciousness were therefore, in the early years, not offered to Coloured women on the same scale as to Whites. Coloured women were generally uneducated and belonged to the lower working-class. They were encouraged to participate in evangelical work and temperance missions, but were not initiated into the "Do-Everything-Policy". The first Coloured unions on the lines of a fully-fledged CC.WCTU union, were only established in Kimberley in 1911 and Cape Town in 1915. These were led by an exclusive Coloured middle-class of teachers, nurses and educated women. Even at that time the majority of Coloured women were working-class, and although encouraged to aspire to leadership positions,

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104. SAL, IOTT, Address of the Western Campaign of the R.W.T.T., January 3 1912, p.1.

105. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, pp.39-40.

## CHAPTER 1.

it was from the educated middle-class that the leadership emerged.<sup>106</sup>

### 1.6. 1889 to 1895. African Temperance Societies.

It was amongst the African women, particularly in the Eastern Cape, that the CC.WCTU found large numbers of converts. This can be partially ascribed to the work of missionaries in the area. For many years mission stations had taught adherence to Victorian Purity codes.<sup>107</sup> Women were encouraged to adopt Western style dress and customs and to form prayer groups, from which a sense of female solidarity evolved.<sup>108</sup>

Therefore, most of the tenets taught by the CC.WCTU temperance, purity and Christian godliness, fell upon ground already prepared by the missionaries. Black CC.WCTU members were "earnest Christians", some of whom had already been victimized because of their religion. To join CC.WCTU prayer meetings many of them walked long distances, some as far as "fourteen to sixteen miles".<sup>109</sup> By 1893 at least five associations of African women, numbering several hundreds of members had affiliated to the CC.WCTU.

Apart from CC.WCTU principles being familiar to African women through missionary teaching, the CC.WCTU proved attractive because it stressed that the role of women was extremely important, an aspect with considerable appeal. In addition the CC.WCTU material aid to women was enthusiastically received. One example of this was the Grahamstown WCTU which secured a better water supply for the local African

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106. The White Ribbon, 95, (4), December, 1989, p.2.

107. Tisani, "The Shaping of Gender Relations", p.22.

108. Ibid., p.24.

109. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.71.

## CHAPTER 1.

population. As women were the drawers, and in many cases, the most frequent users, of water for domestic and irrigation purposes, the CC.WCTU's campaign met with favour in this district and membership increased.<sup>110</sup>

The IOTT was also strongly represented in the Transkei and the Eastern Cape. The Eastern Grand Temple, founded in 1882, was an offshoot of the "Endeavour" Temple of 1876 which originated in Lovedale.<sup>111</sup> Wallace G. Mills suggests that "the temperance movement amongst Africans in the Cape Colony was a manifestation of postmillennial Christianity", in that it was believed that purifying society would be a milestone in the achievement of the millennium.<sup>112</sup> The CC.WCTU fitted into this. The goal of the CC.WCTU's Purity Campaign was "a perfect moral order" which would lead to a "Christian millennium".<sup>113</sup> Membership of the CC.WCTU which fought for temperance and purity, therefore offered African women a form of voicing their protest against their inferior station in society and also an active step towards the achievement of a perfectly equal society.

Despite the growing number of African male converts to the IOTT, which meant that they would approve of their wives and womenfolk joining a women's temperance organization, there were many Africans who were neither Christians nor involved in temperance work. Many women converted to Christianity and joined temperance societies without the permission of their male family members, thus showing that African women were not

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110. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.23.

111. Wallace Mills, "The Roots of African Nationalism in the Cape Colony", Journal of Religion in Africa, 8, (2), 1978, p.203.

112. Ibid., p.211.

113. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, pp.25-26.

## CHAPTER 1.

all passive and reacting merely to circumstances, but were active initiators of change. These were acts of courage. The CC.WCTU acknowledged that it recognized the sacrifice made by these women and admonished white women to understand: "What it means to make an open stand against the customs of your own people, sanctioned by the practice of generations and the voice of the majority, can hardly be told".<sup>114</sup>

It was also an act of feminism; by joining the CC.WCTU without male sanction, they were exercising their right as women to choose a life-style.<sup>115</sup> They were joining a woman's organisation run by women, for women's causes, an act which flew in the face of the patriarchally dominated African society. Not only was she inferior in status as an African, but as a woman she was doubly so in African and Western society.<sup>116</sup>

The CC.WCTU offered them a new voice of protest. The campaigns of temperance and social purity, as in the Western women's spheres of experience, were a protest against abuse by men. These two campaigns were enthusiastically accepted by women in the Transkei. By 1895, four branches of the Blythewood Native Women's Christian Association, and the Tsomo Native Women's Associations, consisting of twenty-four branches, had affiliated to the CC.WCTU.<sup>117</sup>

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114. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, p.40.

115. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.103.

116. H. Tierney, ed, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, (New York, Westport, Connecticut, London, Greenwood Press, 1989), p.43.

117. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, pp.40-41.



## CHAPTER 1.

### 1.7. Young Women's Associations, 1866 to 1895.

There was also a specific department in the CC.WCTU which catered for young women, the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union, generally shortened to "Y's". The majority of members were schoolgirls, the first branch having started at the Huguenot Seminary in 1889.<sup>118</sup> Although the emphasis was primarily on religion, with temperance as a strong second, the girls were offered a variety of interests to encourage them to use all their talents.

However, the "Y's" were not involved in the more controversial campaigns of the CC.WCTU and their activities were limited to the acceptable image of the young Victorian lady. Great emphasis was laid on social work and Christian charity and the importance of learning one's duty as a Christian woman. The "Y's" visited hospitals, the sick and the needy, sewed for the poor, formed choirs who sang in hospitals and asylums, kept railway stations and reading rooms in coffee houses supplied with temperance and social purity literature and ran a Flower Mission.<sup>119</sup>

The Y's training focused on programming girls to become respectable Victorian wives and mothers. But in addition, by their charity work it offered them the opportunity of a limited public life, whereby girls would acquire the skills of organization and independence which were not available within the confines of home.<sup>120</sup> Many of these girls later joined the CC.WCTU and became supporters of the more controversial issues of

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118. Stapleton, A History of the WCTU, p.8.

119. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1895, p.48.

120. Bradlow, "The Oldest Charitable Society in South Africa", p.104.

## CHAPTER 1.

the fight for women's rights.

### 1.8. The Organization of the Unions.

Each Union had an elected President, Secretary, Treasurer and ordinary members. The conditions of individual membership consisted of signing the Pledge and payment of an annual subscription fee, and each Union was liable to contribute a stipulated amount per member each year to the Colonial Union Treasury. To be an auxiliary of the Cape Colonial WCTU (CC.WCTU), a Union had to endorse the constitution of the Cape Colonial Union. All Unions discussed in this dissertation belonged to the Cape Colonial Union. After 1910 the name of this organization changed to the Cape Provincial WCTU (CP.WCTU).

Within the CC/CP.WCTU there were eight Electoral Circles, (or districts), at the head was a President assisted by a Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and a Treasurer. In addition a vice-President was elected from each of the eight Circles. These officers formed the Executive Committee of the CC/CP.WCTU and were elected by delegates from every auxiliary Union in March or April of each year at a venue determined by the Executive Committee. Other posts filled at these elections were those of Colonial Organizers, Colonial Superintendents who were in charge of individual Departments of work, for example the Purity Department, and Standing Committees and their Chairmen. Local Departmental Superintendents were also elected from each Electoral Circle, who were responsible to the Colonial Superintendents.<sup>121</sup>

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121. CA, A.1898, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, pp.4-8.

## CHAPTER 1.

Annual Conventions were held in September/October, at venues throughout the Cape Colony/Province, as decided upon by the Executive Committee. They were attended by all elected officials, ordinary members, visiting lecturers (international and local), and by invitation of the CC/CP.WCTU, church dignitaries, parliamentarians and municipal councillors and representatives of other temperance societies.<sup>122</sup>

### 1.9. Summary of Chapter I.

As has been argued above, because of its aims, origins and enthusiastic leadership and conditions in the Cape Colony, the CC.WCTU, was generally acceptable to women of the Cape Colony. Membership attracted women who were predominantly English-speaking or attracted to English culture, Protestants, members of existing temperance societies, missionaries and their lay workers and converts from mission stations. All members whether African, Coloured or White conformed to the above criteria. Although the aim of the CC.WCTU was to establish new unions with a membership of working class women, in the instances where this goal was achieved, the leadership of such Unions was predominantly taken by the middle-class woman. An analysis of the leadership is important in understanding the achievements of the CC/CP.WCTU and this forms the subject of the following chapter.

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122. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894. pp.4-10.

THE LEADERS OF THE CC WCTU

In his history of the WCTU, Ian Tyrrell states that the study of individual women is important in order to analyze how membership of the WCTU "shaped their consciousness and culture and how that specific cluster of beliefs conditioned their behaviour".<sup>1</sup> It is a pity that there is no record of the lives of ordinary CC.WCTU members and this survey is consequently obliged to evaluate the lives of the leaders. The aim of this chapter is to explore the social background and personalities of some of the leaders and analyze their contribution to the CC.WCTU.

2.1. The Role of Religion.

Religion played a dominant role both in the backgrounds and personal lives of CC.WCTU members. The first branch of the CC.WCTU established in 1889 was at the Huguenot Seminary for Girls, Wellington. As has been said earlier, the principal, Abbie Ferguson and the co-principal, Anna Bliss, both of Puritan stock were American missionaries and the daughters of American Congregational Church ministers.<sup>2</sup> In addition one of the founder members Emma Murray, was the wife of Dutch Reformed Church minister, the Reverend Andrew Murray.<sup>3</sup>

As a training school for teachers and missionaries, the Huguenot Seminary was an invaluable asset to the recruitment of the CC.WCTU. Missionaries and teachers who trained at the school went to work on the Diamond Fields and in Kimberley. One was Mrs Pennington Goolin, who established the first YWCA

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1. Ian Tyrrell, The Absent Marx: Class Analysis and Liberal History in Twentieth Century America, (New York, etc., Greenwood Press, 1986), p.207.
  2. Ferguson, The Builders of Huguenot, p.5, p.8.
  3. Du Plessis, Het Lewen van Andrew Murray, p.496.

## CHAPTER 2.

and "Y's" on the Diamond Fields.<sup>4</sup> Emilie Solomon, who was to become one of the CC.WCTU's most forceful important leaders, first taught at the Seminary and then at the Midland Seminary for Girls at Graaff-Reinet.<sup>5</sup> She was a foundation member of the first Cape Town Central Union and established a thriving Union in Graaff-Reinet.

Emilie's father, Edward, and his brothers were converts to Christianity from Judaism and under the influence of Dr John Philip, Superintendent of the London Missionary Society, Edward became a minister of the Free Church. He married Dr Philip's niece, Jessie Matthews.<sup>6</sup> The importance of religion was carried through to Emilie's schooling, as she attended a mission school in Bedford, then Good Hope Seminary, (founded by Andrew Murray), taught at the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington and then furthered her education at Mount Holyoke in the United States.<sup>7</sup> The principal of Mount Holyoke, Mary Lyon, maintained that women should be given an "intellectual training" whilst learning to do practical domestic work as well, but above all, to seek the Kingdom of God".<sup>8</sup>

Emilie's cousin, Mary Brown (nee Solomon) who was a leader dedicated to fighting the more controversial issues of the CC.WCTU was the daughter of Henry Solomon who supported the mission work of Dr Philip in every way possible.<sup>9</sup> The leader of the first "Y's" branch at Wellington, Anna Cummings,

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4. Women of South Africa, (Cape Town, Le Quesne & Hooton-Smith, 1913), p.GL.

5. J. J. Carson, Emilie Solomon, (Cape Town, Johannesburg, 1941), p.21.

6. Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol.II, (Cape Town, Human Sciences Resource Council, 1972), p.683.

7. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.11.

8. Ferguson, The Builders of Huguenot, p.3.

9. Ibid., p.5.

## CHAPTER 2.

also came from a strong religious background in the United States. She and her two sisters became missionary/teachers at the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington.<sup>10</sup>

Emma Murray, (as has already been indicated), was the daughter of a wealthy Cape Town business man and ardent Christian, Howson Edward Rutherford.<sup>11</sup> Emma even remembered her father setting aside an hour every day, no matter how busy, to communicate with God.<sup>12</sup> It was therefore not surprising that these women should be attracted to the interdenominational CC.WCTU.

Many of the CC.WCTU "crusaders" had some sort of "vision" to justify their activities. Mary Brown saw her participation in the CC.WCTU as a "Holy War" waged with God's blessing.<sup>13</sup> Theresa Campbell, (later married to John Mackay), and president of the CC.WCTU from 1893-1903, felt the same way. She rationalized her involvement by believing that at an impressionable age, she saw women, who joined the Women's Crusade of 1874 in the United States, marching on a bar, and being abused by the owner and customers, and then four years later she saw the bar owner's conversion to temperance in church.<sup>14</sup>

Campbell also witnessed at first hand the collective power of the Women's Crusade of 1874 as probably did many of the other teachers at the Huguenot Seminary who were of American descent. Joining the Wellington WCTU union and

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10. CA, V11, vol.2/1, Address by A. Cummings in 1923.

11. Du Plessis, Het Lewen van Andrew Murray, p.179.

12. CA, V11, vol.2/3/2, Letter A. Cummings to M. Cummings, September, 1875.

13. Brown, A Claim for the Enfranchisement of Women, p.3.

14. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, pp.10-11.

## CHAPTER 2.

beginning a Suffrage Campaign was a natural progression from the Women's Crusades.

From the point of view that the CC.WCTU consisted of a group of women who wished to attract and strengthen the position of Protestant women, they can be considered to have succeeded. Even their terminology, whether on temperance or broader women's issues, was framed in religious connotations. The ideology of the CC.WCTU never strayed from the constraints of Protestantism even when dealing with political, sexual morality and social issues. Their roving ambassadoresses were called "Evangelists" and their membership drives became known as "Crusades".<sup>15</sup>

Crusade Days were held annually as a recruiting exercise and conventions opened and closed with prayers. CC.WCTU members were requested to observe a daily Noontide Prayer Hour. The basis of the CC.WCTU campaign is contained in the following statement: "We do affirm our belief that God in Christ is the King of the Nations, and as such should be acknowledged in our Government, and His World made the basis of our laws."<sup>16</sup>

The Temperance Campaign was also dominated by issues of religion. In 1883 and 1884 there had been a furore between the DRC and the wine farmers over church approval of temperance.<sup>17</sup> Abbie Ferguson and Reverend Andrew Murray had no desire to repeat this controversy, although they were both in favour of temperance. They feared that the start of a CC.WCTU at the Huguenot Seminary would mark the school as a platform

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15. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.32.

16. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.2.

17. Du Plessis, The Life of Andrew Murray, pp.361-365.

## CHAPTER 2.

for temperance thereby making the school a target for the local wine farmers.

Ferguson therefore did little to publicize the lectures of Mary Leavitt in 1889 and it was a relief to her that although pupils flocked to Leavitt's lectures no "explosion" took place "amongst the wine farmers". She felt that the right decision had been taken in starting a CC.WCTU branch.<sup>18</sup> A great deal of her acceptance of the CC.WCTU also hinged on the strong Gospel messages delivered by Mary Leavitt. She enrolled in the CC.WCTU herself, as she reasoned that "Of course my special outside work is Missions, but all these which are for the Master go hand in hand, strengthening one another."<sup>19</sup> CC.WCTU work to her was merely an extension of her mission calling.

Of the teachers on Abbie Ferguson's staff, Mary Palmer was already a member of the WCTU and Virginia Lee Pride, (both Americans), had before Mary Leavitt's visit been "an earnest temperance worker and wears her little white ribbon and talks temperance on all occasions."<sup>20</sup> Most of the women who joined the first CC.WCTU in Wellington were American mission teachers from the Huguenot Seminary to whom this work fell naturally within their calling. There were a number of "ladies from the village" of Wellington who were also early members of the first CC.WCTU but it was from the ranks of the American missionaries

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18. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 5 1889.

19. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 11 1889.

20. CA, V11, vol.2/1, Letter A. Cummings to Home Friends, June 4 1889.



## CHAPTER 2.

at the Huguenot Seminary, that the leadership emerged.<sup>21</sup> Three main factors therefore influenced the consciousness of the early CC.WCTU: an American connection, Christian evangelism and a belief in anti-alcohol campaigns as an integral part of Christian duty.

### 2.2. Personal Magnetism and Public Speaking Ability

Temperance was generally "an unpopular cause" and the personal magnetism of some of the leaders was a reason for women enrolling in the CC.WCTU. Mary Leavitt is credited with this quality, coupled with the necessary ability in public-speaking. "On the platform she is self-possessed as was possible and is such a clean distinct voice that no one has the slightest difficulty in hearing her", but in private she was not an extrovert but was "quiet and dignified".<sup>22</sup>

Mary Leavitt was also a convincing speaker. Her public audiences focused on temperance, and the interlinked popular reforms of the 19th century - slavery, temperance and purity. These lectures were well researched and supported by quoting both local and American laws and statistics obtained from American and British hospitals. She also challenged the audience to "investigate her statements" and linked the facts she presented to Biblical references. The result was halls packed to capacity in Wellington, with "theologians and scholars" and "intelligentsia hearers too."<sup>23</sup>

In the more cosmopolitan Cape Town, Abbie Ferguson feared that the audiences would be poor because Capetonians were keen

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21. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 11, 1889.

22. CA, V11, vol.2/1, Letter A. Cummings to Home Friends, June 4 1889.

23. CA, V11, vol.2/1, Ibid., June 4 1889.

## CHAPTER 2.

supporters of "theatres and entertainments, but it is difficult to get 20 people out to a lecture".<sup>24</sup> However, Leavitt's eloquence drew "large audiences" and by the time she left "she had won her way beautifully in Cape Town".<sup>25</sup> These comments of course were made by women sympathetic to the Temperance cause but a newspaper report bears out the claim to a large appreciative audience.<sup>26</sup>

Public speaking ability and personal charisma made Virginia Lee Pride the first president of the CC.WCTU on its formation in 1889. At the annual convention in Wellington, 1891, "Miss Pride presided with the same charm that I fancy Mrs Willard has."<sup>27</sup> Mary Leavitt also had Pride's ability to appeal to different generations. This seems to have been an important aspect of her success as lecturer and part of the explanation for her attracting audiences in large numbers to lectures even on the "unpopular" subject of temperance.

Her lectures to the pupils of the Huguenot Seminary and surrounding schools and colleges, enthralled her young audiences as she recaptured vivid moments of her tours to exotic islands and lands. The story of her mission tour with hair-raising accounts of live volcanoes, had "over a thousand students in her audience and they begged that after she had given them an hour's talk for several evenings to give them a 'long talk', so once she talked for three hours at one session

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24. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 11 1889.

25. CA, Ibid., Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 25 1889.

26. The Cape Times, May 30 1889, p.2, col.6.

27. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, September 27 1891.

28. CA. V11, vol.2/1, Letter A. Cummings to Home Friends, June 4 1889.

## CHAPTER 2.

and still they listened attentively and wanted more".<sup>28</sup> These were not mere travelogues but accounts of converting the pagan to Christianity and temperance, which succeeded in the formation of the "Y's", whose imaginations were fired by mystique of mission work in foreign lands. One of the attractions of attending these temperance lectures was that they provided good entertainment value.

Katie Stuart's ability as a public speaker earned her a tour of Great Britain with her uncle, Theo Schreiner. On this tour she sometimes had to lecture three to four times each day. Stuart was also involved in electioneering on behalf of British pro-war candidates, during the South African War, and she was reported as making a spirited speech on behalf of a Mr Fitzgerald.<sup>29</sup> Yet, as a woman in South Africa she had no vote and therefore became a member of the Women's Enfranchisement League.<sup>30</sup>

"The gift of oratory", was also credited to Emilie Solomon, "she was one of the few who by some addresses could captivate a hearer into devoted service".<sup>31</sup> These attributes stood her in good stead, as she was elected President of the CC.WCTU in 1911. Her talents were recognized by the International WCTU and as a result she was elected as Vice-President of the WWCTU in 1925. As a result of this appointment she was the first woman in the Southern Hemisphere

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29. Karel Schoeman, Only an Anguish to Live Here: Olive Schreiner and the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Human and Rousseau, 1992), p.87.

30. Women of South Africa, (Cape Town, Cape Times, 1913), p.256.

31. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.113.

## CHAPTER 2.

to hold the office of a WWCTU World's Officer.<sup>32</sup>

### 2.3. The Importance of Education.

Leaders of the CC.WCTU were by and large extremely well educated. Education widened and heightened their desire for greater equality and assisted them in their struggle. For many of these leaders, feminism started from, and developed because of, a resentment which arose out of the inferior education available to girls. Consequently these women gradually became more and more aware of their status as an underprivileged group.

Anna Bliss and Abbie Ferguson became aware of discrimination shortly after their arrival in the Cape Colony in 1873. When paging through algebra books at the Stellenbosch Boy's Gymnasium, the principal remarked that this subject was beyond the learning skills of girls. Abbie Ferguson observed that "we thought he did not know what young ladies could do when given the opportunity".<sup>33</sup> To rectify the imbalance in girls' education and to demonstrate that females were capable of higher learning, Bliss and Ferguson included in the Huguenot Seminary curriculum, "algebra, trigonometry, astronomy, geology, chemistry, Latin, physiology, natural philosophy, botany and moral science".<sup>34</sup> These were subjects only taught in boys' schools. Their pupils wrote the Teachers Examinations as set by the Department of Education for boys and girls. The first year of entry, Huguenot

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32. The South African Women's Who's Who, (Johannesburg, Biographies Ltd, 1938), p.354.

33. Ferguson, The Builders of Huguenot, p.20.

34. C. P. van der Merwe & C. F. Albertyn, Die Vrou, Part I, (Cape Town, Bellville, Stellenbosch, Albertyn, n.d.), p.398.

## CHAPTER 2.

Seminary produced six honours students and a 100% pass rate. When the first teachers graduated in 1878, the diplomas handed to these students were acknowledged as "the nearest approach yet made in South Africa to University honours for women".<sup>35</sup> The Huguenot Seminary has been acknowledged as the pioneer in higher education for women.<sup>36</sup> In recognition of her achievements during 40 years of teaching and elevating the standard of work for girls, Miss Anna Bliss was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Literature degree by the University of South Africa in 1922.<sup>37</sup>

One of the mottos of the CC.WCTU was "Agitate, Educate and Legislate". Education was seen as a weapon to further women's advance. Mount Holyoke, U.S.A, was in the middle 1800s known as the foremost educational institution in America for girls. The benefits of this education were brought to the Cape Colony and the CC.WCTU by Abbie Ferguson, Anna Bliss, Sarah Cummings, Anna Cummings and Lizzie Gamble.<sup>38</sup> Virginia Lee Pride was educated at the highly respected Normal College, U.S.A.<sup>39</sup> Emilie Solomon attended Good Hope Seminary in Cape Town, but owing to family problems could not enroll for further tuition until she began teaching at the Huguenot College. On the advice of Abbie Ferguson she went to America to take further courses in higher education.<sup>40</sup> The American educational influence was therefore strongly represented in the

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35. Ferguson, The Builders of Huguenot, p.41.

36. Ibid., p.20.

37. CA, V11. vol.3/3, Certificate awarded to Dr Anna Bliss on April 1 1922, by the University of South Africa.

38. CA, V11 vol.3/3, Account by M. Allen, The Huguenot News Letter, June, 1925, p.8.

39. Ibid., p.4.

40. Women of South Africa, p.354.

## CHAPTER 2.

leadership of the early CC.WCTU and in this way reached many of the larger towns in the Cape Colony.

Helen Boemkhe, principal of the teacher's training college in Oudtshoorn, was born in Ohio, U.S.A., the home of the Women's Crusades of 1874-75. Amongst many other activities, she was responsible for organizing four temperance clubs in the town and was president of the Oudtshoorn WCTU, Oudtshoorn delegate to the Women's Enfranchisement League Conference and on two sub-committees of the National Council of Women, and she lectured in the U.S.A. and Britain.<sup>41</sup>

Lizzie Gamble, (one of the Cummings sisters), organised a WCTU in Heidelberg, in the Cape Colony and in Uitenhage.<sup>42</sup> Emma Murray, daughter of the Rev Andrew Murray and Emma Murray senior, studied in Holland, Scotland and at the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington. Thereafter she taught in several schools in South Africa, joined the Salvation Army, where she held the rank of Captain, worked for the CC.WCTU and in 1902 began to concentrate on working for "young girls and fallen women" at Magdalena Huis, Cape Town. Her sister, Catherine Murray, became principal of the Huguenot branch colleges, first at Kimberley and then at Graaff-Reinet.<sup>43</sup> Her work for the CC.WCTU in Kimberley was particularly important as it was from this WCTU Union that Coloured Unions were eventually formed.

There was also a strong British influence amongst the leaders of the CC.WCTU. Emilie Solomon's cousin, Mary Brown, attended some of the first classes for women at the University

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41. The South African Women's Who's Who, p.34.

42. CA, V11, vol.3/3, The Huguenot News Letter, June 1925, p.2.

43. Du Plessis, Het Lewen Andrew Murray, p.497.

## CHAPTER 2.

of Cape Town and thereafter studied midwifery in Edinburgh. In the course of these studies she became aware of injustices done to women and decided to devote the rest of her life to fighting this cause. On her return to South Africa in 1905, she joined the CC.WCTU and became Superintendent for Social Purity and Moral Education. Her greatest contribution to South African feminism was her intense involvement in the CC.WCTU and the South African women's suffrage movement. Her qualities of integrity and leadership, as those of her cousin, Emilie Solomon, were given recognition outside of South Africa. She was the first woman to be elected to the Burnley Board of Guardians in England.<sup>44</sup>

Julia Solly exemplified this type of educated woman. She attended the Ladies College at Cheltenham, Liverpool University and thereafter went on to study in Paris and Leipzig. On arrival, after her marriage, in South Africa in 1890, she joined the CC.WCTU. Education for women for betterment of their social status and to obtain the vote for purity and temperance reasons, was her priority. Solly's interests were wide and varied. She was the first woman to join the S. A. Association for the Advancement of Science, was Vice-President of the National Council of Women and for her work on this Council she received the King George Silver Jubilee Medal in 1935.<sup>45</sup> Many of the other leaders of CC.WCTU also worked for several associations.

General J. C. Smuts called Emilie Solomon "a woman of

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44. Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, pp.29-31.

45. The South African Women's Who's Who, p.353.

## CHAPTER 2.

outstanding ability".<sup>46</sup> This ability resulted in her election as the first woman Deacon of the Congregational Church, Sea Point, Cape Town and she later made church history as the first woman unanimously elected as Chairman of the Congregational Union of South Africa.<sup>47</sup> As regards breaking barriers for feminism, the leaders of the CC.WCTU therefore, in their personal lives and capacities set records for firsts as women entering previously all male territory. More important was that they carried this personal desire to greater lengths. General Smuts said of Emilie Solomon, "she was always prepared to plead some human cause, the cause of women, of opportunities for a better life, the cause of Coloured or Native people which ever lay heavily upon her mind or some matter of social reform such as temperance and the like."<sup>48</sup>

In a similar fashion, the leaders of the CC.WCTU used their privileges and talents to raise the status of other women in the Cape Colony. The combination of the benefit of a middle-class education, which opened their minds and the fervour of religion, inspired them to fight for women's rights. As educated women they were aware of their capabilities in relation to men, the restrictions placed upon them by men, and they had the wherewithal to begin campaigns to right these injustices. Julia Solly ordered and copied all Government Blue Books as well as any laws pertaining to temperance, purity and women's enfranchisement, which she then distributed to all CC.WCTU branches. Lectures and discussions were regularly held to "educate" CC.WCTU members on government procedure, how

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46. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.vi.

47. Ibid., p.35.

48. Ibid., p.vi.



## CHAPTER 2.

to lobby, and how to present petitions.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.4. The Contribution of Economic Security.

In addition to religious fervour, personal charm, and the benefits of education, these middle-class women also had the privilege of a comfortable income, which gave them the means to acquire the education and the time to become involved in outside interests. Many wives of prominent citizens and businessmen either enrolled in the CC.WCTU or supported its campaigns. Women from the upper establishment of Cape society were also interested in the work of the CC.WCTU. Both Lady Sprigg, wife of Sir Gordon Sprigg, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from November 1886 to July 1890, and Lady Loch, wife of the Sir Henry Loch, High Commissioner for the British Government, in the 1880s and 1890s, were active supporters of CC.WCTU campaigns.<sup>50</sup>

Maria Bridget Cleghorn, wife of a wealthy shopowner, and her daughter Anne were involved in work for the Purity Department of the CC.WCTU of which Maria Cleghorn was superintendent for the Cape Town WCTU. She and Anne were actively involved in "rescue work" with prostitutes in the seedier areas of Cape Town.<sup>51</sup> As a founder member of the YWCA, Cape Town, and President of the Association, she was instrumental in spreading the tenets of the CC.WCTU to working-class girls.<sup>52</sup> Another relative, Flora Anne Cleghorn, devoted her spare time to the CC.WCTU as well as

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49. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, pp.45-46.

50. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, January 22 1890.

51. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter, A. Ferguson to M. Allen, December 28 1891.

52. Women of South Africa, p.72.

## CHAPTER 2.

being a board member of the Women's Hospital Aid Board.<sup>53</sup> Jessie Hartnoll was married to E. Hartnoll of The Cape Times when she was president of the Cape Peninsula WCTU and was a member of the WEL. After a lecture tour in Rhodesia, she established several branches there.<sup>54</sup> Jessie Rose-Innes, wife of Sir James Rose-Innes, Attorney-General of the Cape Colony, was a staunch supporter of the CC.WCTU. The CC.WCTU encouraged its members to support and work for many of his proposals to the Cape Parliament, especially as he suggested many pro-temperance and purity enforcement measures.<sup>55</sup>

In some respects it could be argued that all these women were merely charity workers seeking an outlet for their middle-class boredom. However, it must be borne in mind that the charities, social work or organizations they chose to become involved in, all had the interests of women as their primary focus. It is significant that even if they were bored, they became involved in proto-feminist activities and not recreational hobbies such as gardening. The book, Women of South Africa, 1913, lists the most prominent middle-class women of that time, throughout South Africa. Most of them were involved in charity work of some kind, but it is the members of the CC.WCTU, listed in this work, who are the most representative of organizations working for women's rights.

### 2.5. A Liberal Political Background.

Another factor uniting CC.WCTU leading women was their liberal background. American women had in many of the Northern States already achieved the vote and a higher standard

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53. Women of South Africa, p.60.

54. Ibid., p.127.

55. SAL, MSC.21, J. Rose-Innes Collection, passim.

## CHAPTER 2.

of education. The American teachers at the Huguenot College, Wellington, came from these Northern States with a history of civil rights campaigns.

Exposure to liberal politics through their family undoubtedly influenced Emilie Solomon and Mary Brown. Their uncle, Saul Solomon, was labelled a "negrophile" because of his liberal politics and defence of any legislation he thought unjust to the Coloured and Black population. The repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts was a priority for him as far back as 1872. His wife Georgina, was a well-educated woman and the principal of Good Hope Seminary. When the family moved to England she joined the suffragette movement and her daughter, Daisy Dorothea "became a leader in the women's social and political organizations in England".<sup>56</sup> Daisy was arrested and imprisoned in Holloway Prison for her participation in the suffrage campaign.<sup>57</sup>

Emilie Solomon was exposed to politics within her immediate family as her brothers, Richard, who was an advocate and Edward, who was an attorney, were both politicians. Richard was appointed as Attorney-General of the Transvaal.<sup>58</sup> As a child Emilie Solomon attended the same primary school as the future Sir James Rose-Innes in Bedford. There was social contact between the families, her father, the Reverend Edward Solomon, was the minister of the Free Church and Sir James's father was the local magistrate.<sup>59</sup> Both women were related to

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56. Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol.II, p.683.

57. CA, A.1657, vol.324, Letter G. Solomon to O. Schreiner; Letter D. Solomon from Holloway Prison.

58. Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol.II, p.683.

59. R.W. Rose-Innes, "A South African Village and Personal Recollections of Emilie Solomon", South African Outlook, June, 1944.

## CHAPTER 2.

Jan H. Hofmeyer, as he was a "kinsman of Saul Solomon".<sup>60</sup> Liberal politics in one form or another ran through the family's history as the Solomons were exceptionally involved in politics.

At a WCTU convention in London in 1925, Saul Solomon and his niece, Mary Brown, were cited as the two South Africans who had made the most impact on the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.<sup>61</sup> Dedication to the cause of Social Purity, especially in fighting the CDA and having the Age of Consent raised in the Cape Colony earned Mary Brown the post of Superintendent of the CC.WCTU's Purity Department.<sup>62</sup> This involved supervision of the South African WCTU's Purity Departments, as in 1911, at the Kimberley convention, the Cape, Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State WCTU's united to form the South African WCTU.<sup>63</sup>

Saul Solomon is credited for his influence on Mary Brown who took up his "cause of the oppressed and the suffering."<sup>64</sup> Another important influence in this direction was her friendship with Keir Hardie which prompted her to adopt socialism. Socialism was one of the feminist traditions at the time<sup>65</sup> as to these feminists it was the means to uplift the poor and oppressed and thereby improve the lot of women.<sup>66</sup> The CC.WCTU in the early 20th century, although non-party supporters in terms of official policy, supported the Labour Party. With

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60. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.2.

61. The White Ribbon, July, 1928, p.3.

62. Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, p.31.

63. The White Ribbon, vol. 94, no.3, September, 1989, p.40.

64. Ibid., September, 1928, p.7.

65. The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, p.31.

66. Ibid., p.viii.

## CHAPTER 2

the CC.WCTU focus on social welfare politics, these women pinned their hopes on the Labour Party to obtain the passing of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill.<sup>67</sup> The cues for political affiliation were taken from the leaders, Mary Brown, Emilie Solomon, and Julia Solly.

The socialist outlook of the CC.WCTU undoubtedly affected its official policy that women, both White and Coloured, had the "intellect and ability" to be "the sharers in management of the state". Brown suggested that the qualification for equality was education and/or property ownership and in the case of Coloured women, a minimum wage of £50 per year.<sup>68</sup> She was therefore debarring a large section of working class women, both White and Coloured from equal opportunities. She took into consideration, however, that the male vote had qualifications which were commonly accepted by her generation. Despite this exclusion the official CC.WCTU policy she expressed was feminist in that she averred that there would be a far greater proportion of women voters if the Coloured community were allowed votes on a qualification basis. Coloured women, by this argument were more intelligent and more in need of an education than their menfolk.<sup>69</sup>

Many CC.WCTU leaders were also involved in other organizations which had values in common with those of the CC.WCTU Emilie Solomon's concern for equality, for example, extended beyond gender equality and women's rights, and she was prominent in the Institute for Race Relations.<sup>70</sup> Even to her

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67. The White Ribbon, April, 1928, p.8.

68. Brown, A Claim for the Enfranchisement of Women, pp.10-12.

69. Ibid., p.8.

70. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.14.

## CHAPTER 2.

WCTU work she brought an element of racial equality.

Not surprisingly, given her politically engaged family background, Solomon was outspoken on the subject of the vote. As has been mentioned, she had considerable ability and a high educational standard, and she was thus the ideal CP.WCTU representative to appear before a Union Parliamentary Select Committee which was investigating the suffrage issue in 1926.<sup>71</sup> Another CP.WCTU member directly engaged in the franchise issue, (although she limited her interest to women), at this time was J. C. MacIntosh of the Port Elizabeth WCTU, who was president of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union (WEAU) and a member of the WEL.<sup>72</sup>

Another WCTU leader who shared the religious, educational, social and political background of the others, also came from the Eastern Cape, Lady MacIntosh. She was also a graduate of the Huguenot Seminary and was married to a wealthy prominent politician, (the M. P. for Port Elizabeth), who gave her every encouragement in her WCTU duties.<sup>73</sup>

### 2.6. Male Support and Opposition.

Although the emphasis thus far has been on women themselves, there is no doubt that another factor which greatly influenced the quality of the CC/CP.WCTU leadership was the attitude of men. Many CC/CP.WCTU leaders were supported by males, particularly within their own families. However, on balance it seems likely that more motivation came from the male politicians and civic leaders. The efforts of the CC/CP.WCTU were spurred on by opposition, and made the CC/CP.WCTU leaders

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71. The White Ribbon, August, 1926, p.4.

72. Ibid., September, 1989, p.39.

73. Women of South Africa, p.173.

## CHAPTER 2.

even more determined to fight for suffrage and gender equality.

Sir Henry Loch, the British High Commissioner of the Cape Colony, and Sir Gordon Sprigg, four times Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, both encouraged their wives to support CC.WCTU activities but this was no insurance that legislature in favour of temperance and purity would be introduced by sympathetic parliamentarians. Sir Gordon Sprigg's refusal to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts was particularly reprehensible to the CC.WCTU, as this organization could not reconcile his openly professing to be a devout Christian with showing "awful disrespect" to his own family and to women by refusing to have these discriminatory laws repealed.<sup>74</sup>

He was censured by Abbie Ferguson when she attended a "Teacher's Luncheon" over which Sir Gordon Sprigg presided and where the wine flowed freely. She felt that those in power should set an example and legislate that no liquor be served at any state "entertainments."<sup>75</sup> Both these incidents led to the leaders of the CC.WCTU urging members to intensify the suffrage campaign. Another formidable opponent to feminist aspirations was Cecil John Rhodes. In the first years of his premiership, Abbie Ferguson believed Rhodes was on their side, as in contrast to Sir Gordon Sprigg he banned the sale of liquor at railway stations.<sup>76</sup> The British South African Company stopped the free importation of liquor. Vines were replaced with fruit trees on the experimental Rhodes fruit farms. Rhodes to

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74. CA, 1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, pp.14-15.

75. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 25 1889.

76. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, July 30 1890.

## CHAPTER 2.

her was a "peculiar instrument raised up to God", an answer to the prayers of the CC.WCTU.<sup>77</sup>

In reality Rhodes entertained as freely with liquor if not more, than his ousted predecessor, Sir Gordon Sprigg. He is alleged to have drunk "chablis for lunch, whisky and soda before dinner, two or three glasses of champagne and two or three whiskies from dinner to bedtime" and was seen to consume "a whole bottle of chartreuse at a sitting".<sup>78</sup> Cape vines were infected with Phylloxera which contributed to the economic depression of the early 1890s. The heavy duty on imported liquor was part of a plan to oust Sir Gordon Sprigg and gain favour with the Dutch farmers, as was the importation of American vines which were Phylloxera resistant.<sup>79</sup> These strategies were an attempt to bolster up the wine industry which was one of the Cape Colony's largest sources of income. By 1902, many of the fruit trees on the experimental farms were replaced by vine, on Rhodes' instructions, as they did not yield the same profit as the vines.<sup>80</sup>

Abbie Ferguson's religious training and fervour blinded her at first to these realities. Combined with the small victory in temperance matters the tunnel vision of religion and temperance obscured the political machinations of a man who was an implacable enemy of feminism. He fought the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the Raising of the Age of Consent,

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77. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, March 12 1891.

78. Robert I. Rotberg, The Founder: Cecil John Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power, (Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers, 1988), p.413.

79. Harrison M. Wright. ed., Sir James Rose-Innes: Selected Correspondence 1884-1902, (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1972), p.2.

80. Rotberg, The Founder, p.639.



## CHAPTER 2.

which were prime issues of the CC.WCTU's Purity Campaign.<sup>81</sup>

The CC.WCTU leaders also experienced benevolent male influence and particularly in the case of married women this was of great importance. The WCTU's strength in America is partially attributed to the greater freedom allowed women within the family circle and marriage.<sup>82</sup> In the case of the CC.WCTU leaders, male support contributed towards their liberal political outlook and freedom to speak in public, publishing their views in documents and to lead a public life. As in the instance of the White middle-class WCTU members championing the Coloured and White working-class women, this was another example of the not-so-oppressed speaking for the oppressed.

Lady MacIntosh worked together with her husband on several charity projects.<sup>83</sup> Mary Brown's doctor husband was supportive of her CC.WCTU and WEL<sup>84</sup> work and Julia Solly's husband, Herbert le Gay Solly, a government engineer, in his letters to her discussed the politics of Rhodes, Sivewright, Hofmeyer, Rose-Innes and Merriman. He was obviously of the opinion that his wife was politically aware of and interested in the changing fortunes of the Cape Colonial government.<sup>85</sup> A prolific writer of pamphlets for the WEL, Julia Solly lists as male suffragettes, Sir James Rose-Innes, Senator F. W. Reitz then President of the Senate and Professor Marais of the Theological College, Stellenbosch.<sup>86</sup> Feminism had made

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81. B. A. Tindall, ed, James Rose-Innes, (Cape Town, London, New York, Oxford University Press, 1949), p.101.

82. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.137.

83. Women of South Africa, p.173.

84. The White Ribbon, December, 1989, p.72.

85. CA, A.702, Herbert and Julia Solly Collection, Letter Herbert to Julia, March 27 1898.

86. CA, A.702, Julia Solly, Woman's Suffrage, 1920.

## CHAPTER 2.

inroads into the highest echelons of power. A. L. Geard of Port Elizabeth who was president of the CC.WCTU's Colonial Union from 1922 to 1928, was encouraged by her husband to hold large gatherings in her drawing room and garden to attract new members, in a friendly atmosphere, to the CP.WCTU and the WEL.<sup>87</sup>

Olive Schreiner's brother, Theo, had a great influence on his niece, Katie Stuart. They were both ardent temperance workers committed to evangelical work and leaders in the IOGT. Katie Stuart's involvement with the IOTT made her a natural candidate to be elected as Superintendent of Native and Coloured Work for the CC.WCTU and she was a frequent lecturer at CC.WCTU meetings.<sup>88</sup> She was an experienced public speaker who had, as previously mentioned, accompanied Theo Schreiner on tours to Great Britain as a temperance lecturer and representative of the Imperial Association of Africa.<sup>89</sup>

Katie Stuart was the embodiment of all the ideals of the CC.WCTU. Her mother grew up on a mission station and Stuart numbered the British and Foreign Bible Society and the CC.WCTU among her prime interests. She also belonged to the South African Temperance Alliance, the People's League, the Clothing Guild and the Guild of Loyal Women. As vice-president of the YWCA she filled her middle-class obligation of training young working class women in the ethics of Christianity and middle-class morality.<sup>90</sup>

As in the case of Emilie Solomon and Mary Brown, she had

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87. The White Ribbon, June, 1931, p.4.

88. SAL, MSC.26, The Olive Schreiner Collection, Box.8, File 4, Newspaper Clippings.

89. Schoeman, Only an Anguish, p.87.

90. Women of South Africa, p.256.

## CHAPTER 2.

the advantage of a political home environment in which the men of the family were actively involved in politics. Her uncle, William Phillip Schreiner, was leader of the South African Party, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1898 to 1900, and a temperance supporter. He was also a liberal politician and in 1909 led the delegation representing the interests of Indians, Coloureds and Blacks to London to amend the South African Bill.<sup>91</sup>

His brother, Theo Schreiner, believed in equal rights for women. Frances Willard, leader of the WCTU set the official policy for the WCTU as "co-operation" and not "competition" with men. Men who followed this code were honoured by the WCTU as "Knights of the New Chivalry" or a "brotherhearted man" and Katie Stuart awarded this accolade her uncle.<sup>92</sup> Inspired by his example she became the joint-president with Mrs Prescott of the first Coloured and Native Union of the WCTU to be formed in South Africa, in 1911.<sup>93</sup>

### 2.8. The Schreiner Family influence.

Besides the support of Katie Stuart and her uncles for the CC.WCTU, two other members of the Schreiner family influenced the work of the CC.WCTU. Olive Schreiner was a personal friend of many of the CC.WCTU leaders, who corresponded with her and sought her advice on suffrage. Her first published novel, The Story of an African Farm, was edited by Mary Brown in 1880, in Burnley, Lancashire, who then forwarded it to a publisher in Edinburgh. After Olive

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91. Trewella Cameron & S. B. Spies, eds, An Illustrated History of South Africa, (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball and Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1986), p.227.

92. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.134.

93. The White Ribbon, September, 1928, p.7.

## CHAPTER 2.

Schreiner's death, in memory of her friend, Mary Brown was instrumental in establishing "The Olive Schreiner Memorial Nursery Fund" for young unmarried mothers in Cape Town, as a tribute to Olive's championship of Lyndall.<sup>84</sup>

Olive Schreiner's bond with the leaders of the CC.WCTU was more than her feminist ideals, she was a socialist who fought for the rights of women and those of the Black and Coloured population.<sup>85</sup> She supported the CC.WCTU on the campaign for the repeal of the CDA and the raising of the Age of Consent.<sup>86</sup> For her it was not merely a religious campaign but a feminist issue. Emily Pankhurst also placed this campaign within the domain of feminist work when she cited "sexual immorality" as one of the "three greatest evils in the Empire" and sought the WCTU's help in combating this universal degradation of women. A "home for fallen men", she suggested was more in line with the problems of immorality.<sup>87</sup>

On the formation of the WEL, Olive Schreiner added her signature to those of Julia Solly, Maria Cleghorn and Helen Davison of the CC.WCTU, on a petition handed to the Cape Colonial government for the repeal of the CDA. Julia Solly was an intimate friend of Olive Schreiner and invited her to become vice-president of the WEL in 1907.<sup>88</sup>

Both Jessie Rose-Innes and Mary Sauer supported suffrage, the CC.WCTU enfranchisement campaign, and were

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94. The White Ribbon, September, 1928, p.6

95. Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, p.178.

96. Ruth First and Anne Scott, Olive Schreiner, (London, The Women's Press, 1989), p.149.

97. D. Mitchell, Emily Pankhurst: The Fighting Pankhursts, (London, Jonathan Cape, 1967), pp.145-146.

98. SAL, Annual Report of the Women's Enfranchisement League, April 18 1908.

## CHAPTER 2.

friends of Olive Schreiner, writing to her and visiting her.<sup>99</sup> Mary's husband, Jacobus Sauer as a member of the Cape Parliament from 1874 to 1910, was a valuable ally to the CC.WCTU. The leaders of the CC.WCTU therefore, did not lead their lives in religious isolation, they mingled with public personalities with whom they interacted and by whom they were influenced.

The other member of the Schreiner family who determined the course taken by the CC.WCTU, was Olive Schreiner's sister, Henrietta (Ettie) Stakesby-Lewis. In contrast to Olive, she was a deeply committed Christian and temperance worker and a member of the CC.WCTU.<sup>100</sup> It was through contact with Ettie Stakesby-Lewis that an outstanding Coloured woman, Anna Tempo, (Sister Nannie), emerged as a leader of the Native and Coloured WCTU.

### 2.8. Coloured Leadership.

Although the WWCTU preached the ideal of international sisterhood, in the Cape Colony with its Coloured, Black and White communities and cultures, further complicated by the antagonism between Dutch and English, this was almost impossible to achieve. Amongst the White leaders there was a support chain; a social intermingling of teas, visits and correspondence, which formed friendships. Personal and CC/CP.WCTU problems were shared. There is no evidence that Coloured or African women were ever invited into this elite

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99. SAL, MSC.26, Box 2.11, Letters O. Schreiner to Mary Sauer, April 12 1894 and August 7 1897.

100. CA, A.1898, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.1:  
CA, V11, vol.2/2, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, May 15 1900.

## CHAPTER 2.

circle. It was not until 1911 that a Coloured and Native Union was started in Kimberley by two white women, Mrs Prescott, wife of the local Wesleyan minister and Katie Stuart. The idea was to train Coloured women to take over this Union but it took more than fifteen years to achieve when Mrs M. Abrahams, (wife of a Congregational minister), was elected as head. The records of the CP.WCTU contain little information on this Union as it has its own privately held records.<sup>101</sup>

However, there are records of at least one Coloured leader of ability who did not have the privileges of middle-class wealth, education or family status and despite these obstacles became "a legend in her own time" within the WCTU.<sup>102</sup> Her nickname was "Sister Nannie", as mentioned above, but she was born Anna Tempo, on 23 September 1867, the daughter of emancipated slaves. Her mother fled from her alcoholic abusive husband to Worcester, where she and her children attended the Mission Church and were heavily involved with religion.<sup>103</sup>

In 1884, Anna Tempo was employed by Ettie Stakesby-Lewis and through her employer, Tempo thus became involved in temperance work. When Stakesby-Lewis toured Australia, the United States and England, she was accompanied by Tempo,<sup>104</sup> which enabled Anna to develop her leadership qualities. Whilst living in Ireland Tempo learnt new skills while employed as a nurse for a colonel and his family. In South Africa she belonged to the IOTT for Coloured people, but in Ireland she

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101. The White Ribbon, September 1989, pp.72-75.

102. Ibid., p.72.

103. Sister Nannie, (Cape Town, WCTU, 1939), pp.2-5.

104. Ibid., p.10.

## CHAPTER 2.

was invited to join a White WCTU, which gave her full membership.<sup>105</sup>

On her return to South Africa, she was appointed Matron of the newly opened Stakesby-Lewis Hostels. "Sister Nannie" paid regular visits to the docks, Lock Hospital and the slums of Cape Town.<sup>106</sup> With her international and practical experience she was appointed Superintendent of Prison Work in 1915 of the Coloured and Native WCTU.<sup>107</sup> Her expertise in administration work was extended to Coloured women and she helped them form a committee which together with the Cape Town City Council and the police, founded a home for Coloured girls who were prostitutes, unmarried mothers or runaways. The house was named the "Nannie House" and is still operational today.<sup>108</sup>

She was honoured by the Coloured Union, which formed a WCTU in Worcester, named "The Anna Tempo Union".<sup>109</sup> An even greater recognition of her work was awarded to her in 1937, the King George Coronation Medal.<sup>110</sup> Therefore despite her lack of formal education and middle-class background, she was an outstanding leader.

### 2.9. The Influence of Travel

The American teacher/missionaries in the CC.WCTU made frequent trips to America and England to visit family and friends. During their travels in these countries, they attended temperance meetings and brought back information that

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105. Sister Nannie, pp.12-15.

106. A. G. H. Loubser, Die Achterburten van Kaapstad, (Stellenbosch, Pro Ecclesia Drukkery, 1921), p.24.

107. The White Ribbon, September, 1989, p.72.

108. Sister Nannie, p.15.

109. The White Ribbon, September, 1989, p.72.

110. Sister Nannie, p.20.

## CHAPTER 2.

would help the temperance cause and women's rights. Delegates were also chosen to attend the International WCTU conventions held in America, Great Britain and on the Continent. The CC/CP.WCTU leaders firmly believed in the value of the interchange of ideas with the international community of women. Reports on these international conventions were made and distributed throughout the Cape Colony/Cape Province, as well as personal verbal reports made at Colonial WCTU conventions.

These conventions were organised as far apart as Cape Town, Kimberley, East London, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, and Cradock. It was quite common for leaders not to take the direct route home from a convention, but to stop off at small towns en route, where WCTU branches existed. They felt it was vital to keep the bonds of sisterhood alive and the latest information flowing. Except in the case of Sister Nannie, this was possible because they possessed the material means to travel and the educational background.

### 2.10. Characteristics of the Leaders and the Effect on the CC/CP.WCTU.

It thus becomes clear that many characteristics were common to the leaders of the CC/CP.WCTU. They were religious, and this was a basic driving force. However, education and middle-class status gave them the material and administrative ability to organise and sustain an organization. All CC/CP.WCTU leaders resented strongly the male legal system which relegated them to second-class citizenship.

Their strong religious backgrounds influenced their work for all women irrespective of race and class. The predominant middle-class outlook, however, also brought obstacles.



## CHAPTER 2.

Equality meant adopting middle-class standards and becoming a Christian, educated, property-owning woman with British imperialist loyalties. A great deal of this mindset was inherent in the policies of the mother WCTU in America and the majority of leading members of the CC.WCTU were of Anglo/American descent.<sup>111</sup>

The family and friendship circles which were liberal, encouraged them to reach out to other women. Their goals of temperance, evangelical revival and moral purity spurred them on to make converts who would carry on the fight for women's rights. However, the converse was often true. These three tenets of WCTU policy alienated and/or barred many women from joining the WCTU and prevented a rapid and early growth in the Suffrage Campaign.<sup>112</sup>

The emergence of feminist consciousness in the Cape Colony owes a great deal to the leaders of the CC/CP.WCTU, in particular to their desire for the franchise and for public positions of power. In Chapter 3 therefore, the link between evangelism, temperance and feminism in the Cape Colony will be examined.

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111. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.9.

112. Tuttle, Encyclopedia of Feminism, p.356.

## CHAPTER 3.

### THE PASSIVE ASPECTS OF THE TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN.

The Temperance Campaign of the CC.WCTU played a major role in the start of feminism in the Cape Colony. Through their desire to achieve temperance goals the Leaders of the CC.WCTU inaugurated a Legislation and Petition Department in 1891, which became the training ground for the CC.WCTU's suffrage campaign of the early 20th century.<sup>1</sup> It is the work of this particular Department which provides evidence of the feminist platform of the CC.WCTU. The scope of the Temperance Campaign was large. It included many forms of conversion to temperance, some more aggressive than others and which even verged on modern feminism. Other strategies of this Campaign, however, fitted into the conventional mould of "respectable middle-class ladies," and included social and charitable work emphasizing motherhood, domesticity and education.<sup>2</sup> Because of the distinction between them, these two aspects of the Temperance Campaign, the aggressive and the passive, will be discussed in different chapters. In this chapter the effectiveness of the more conventional strategies will be discussed.

#### 3.1. The Commencement of the CC.WCTU Temperance Campaign.

In order to ascertain why the CC.WCTU considered that a Temperance Campaign was necessary in the Cape Colony, the background with regard to the liquor industry and the liquor laws of the Cape Colony must be discussed. One of the reasons for the start of the Temperance Campaign was the CC.WCTU's belief that

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1. CA, A.1696, vol. 2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.4.
  2. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.124.

### CHAPTER 3.

there was a great "traffic in alcoholics"<sup>3</sup> in the Cape Colony.

The large number of liquor outlets in Cape Town alone gave rise to this concern. In 1887, there were one hundred and seventy licensed hotels and canteens in Cape Town as well as thirty-six bottle stores. In addition several private clubs for men offered strong liquor.<sup>4</sup> Even politicians were concerned at the situation. In 1889, Sir Gordon Sprigg, Prime Minister of the Colony, appointed a Liquor Laws Commission to investigate the effectiveness of the legislation currently in operation in the Colony. One line of enquiry was to establish whether there were too many liquor outlets.<sup>5</sup>

Although all the Commissioners were men and no CC.WCTU members were even called upon to give evidence,<sup>6</sup> many of its findings concurred with the views of the CC.WCTU. One was that far too many licences had been issued, particularly in the more squalid areas of Cape Town. The Commission was presented with evidence that these ramshackle pubs and canteens were frequented from early in the morning until late at night, by drunken, rowdy, brawling customers. Women and children formed a large proportion of the clientele.<sup>7</sup> Even the centre of Cape Town was affected, as the canteens in question were dotted throughout the city, from the Waterkant side of Strand Street to Hanover Street and continued into the slums of District Six. Even the railway station sold alcohol freely. The police were unable to keep

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3. CA, A.1696, vol. 2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

4. Cathy Knox, Victorian Life at the Cape 1870-1900, (Cape Town, Fernwood Press, 1992), pp.108-111.

5. G.1-'90, Minutes of the proceedings of the Liquor Laws Commission of 1889-1890, p.9, (G. is the abbreviation for the official records of the Government of the Cape Colony).

6. Ibid., p.1.

7. Ibid., p.13.

### CHAPTER 3.

control of this area and vice, smuggling and crime thrived.<sup>8</sup> The Commission also found that customers purchasing household goods from nearby grocery stores were often tempted to buy alcohol at the same time. It was therefore recommended that these stores provide separate entrances and rooms for the sale of liquor alone.<sup>9</sup> One of the more disturbing points uncovered by the Commission was the several instances of "excessive drinking by children of wine". The Commission proposed that a law be passed to prevent the sale of "spirits and intoxicating liquors" to children. Thus on the grounds of the evidence presented to the Commission the CC.WCTU was correct in its view that trafficking in liquor in the Colony had to be controlled.<sup>10</sup>

One of the CC.WCTU's first actions was to protest against the sale of alcohol at railway stations and to attempt to replace this with "the sale of tea, coffee and cold-drinks".<sup>11</sup> Kimberley station was especially being cited as the scene of constant drunken uproar.<sup>12</sup>

The CC.WCTU opposed the "tot" system and the sale of unlicensed liquor in the country districts,<sup>13</sup> another problem aired by the Commission. Under this system employees were given rations of liquor each day, as part of their meagre wages. Many farm labourers were so addicted that they spent a great deal of their wages on buying more liquor. In country districts many farmers sold liquor illicitly without licences, and even accepted

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8. G.1-'90, p.14-15.

9. Ibid., p.17.

10. Ibid., p.19.

11. CA, A. 1896, vol. 2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

12. G.1-'90, p.17.

13. CA, A. 1896, vol. 2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

### CHAPTER 3.

items of barter from those who had no money. This meant that even the poorest people could obtain alcohol.

The "tot" system, which the CC.WCTU fought for many years, was considered by one witness on the Commission to be "a dread on women and children residing in the country",<sup>14</sup> and yet farmers maintained this system to attract labourers to their farms. Indeed, this system was of economic benefit to the farmers as it formed part of the wages and the liquor served was generally of such poor quality that labourers were so inebriated and addicted to the daily tots, that they could not work without the help of alcohol. Moreover the "tot" system ensured a constant labour supply and the leaders of the agricultural community claimed that labourers would only work where the "tot" system was offered. Eventually this system spread from the Western Cape throughout the Colony,<sup>15</sup> and was one of the CC.WCTU's main objectives in starting the Temperance Campaign in the rural areas.

Besides the decision to fight the Temperance Campaign in both urban and rural areas, the CC.WCTU felt it was vital to include all population groups in opposing the sale of liquor. Abbie Ferguson of the Wellington WCTU stated that "intemperance amongst White people is much more than it used to be and among our Blacks it is terrible".<sup>16</sup> Once more the Commission had the evidence to confirm the views of the CC.WCTU, that the population as a whole was affected by alcohol abuse.<sup>17</sup>

As far as the African population was concerned, "Kaffir

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14. G.1-'90, p.21.

15. Paul la Hausse, Brewers Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of the Liquor Industry in South Africa, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1988), p.12.

16. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, March 3 1891,

17. G.1-'90, p.44.

### CHAPTER 3.

Beer" and "Kaffir Beer Dances", were alleged to have led to stock theft, murder and absenteeism from work. It was proposed to enforce a restriction of only two gallons of beer per hut.<sup>18</sup>

Another reason for the Temperance Campaign was that the CC.WCTU considered that the population of the Cape Colony was apathetic to intemperance and that more publicity was therefore required. Katie Stuart, a leader of the CC.WCTU, ascribed this indifference to the fact that most middle class people were of the opinion that drunkenness was only prevalent in the lower classes. In her experience this was untrue: "In fact the cream of society in South Africa was affected and alas it was the women who were principally the victims".<sup>19</sup>

Contemporary records reflect that Katie Stuart was correct in her belief that the middle and upper classes were as susceptible to alcoholism as were the lower classes. In 1891 there were seven homes in Cape Town for alcoholics, and in that year the highest number of admissions was recorded. A new home for twenty female patients was opened in 1890, and had been filled so quickly that there was a waiting list "of females of all walks of society". Of the male patients in homes "fifty were college educated, fifty-seven gentlemen of no occupation, twenty-four merchants, twenty clerks, fifteen medical practitioners, eleven retired military officers, nine solicitors, nine civil servants, seven manufacturers, six clerks in Holy Orders and six tutors".<sup>20</sup>

Another main tenet of the CC.WCTU was the link between the consumption of alcohol and the destruction of mind and body.

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18. G.1-'90, p.31.

19. The Cape Argus, December 15 1891, p.6, col.2.

20. Ibid., October 1 1891, p.6, col.4.

### CHAPTER 3.

With evidence of widespread alcoholism through society the CC.WCTU believed that the Temperance Campaign would help to prevent insanity. To the CC.WCTU, males were the chief abusers of alcohol and therefore most at risk. This view is substantiated by statistics on mental health for the early 1890s. In 1891 and 1892 of the reasons given for admissions to Valkenberg Mental Asylum, the third highest was the excessive consumption of alcohol and these admissions were all men.<sup>21</sup>

The CC.WCTU also therefore saw a need to "protest against the sale of all alcoholic liquors to all uncivilized and unprotected people",<sup>22</sup> including the illiterate and the poor of all races, who were not aware of the destructive effects of alcohol. In the Cape Colony, especially in the Western Cape, liquor was cheap and easy to procure, as has been explained. Especially in the case of the working-class, public houses and canteens offered necessary places of recreation away from crowded, filthy, living conditions.<sup>23</sup>

Thus alcohol, poverty and disease were linked by the CC.WCTU and the Temperance Campaign of the WCTU was seen as a weapon to combat all three. In particular, the teaching of Scientific Temperance Education to remedy disease and poverty by, among other skills, teaching hygiene and basic household accomplishments. The CC.WCTU saw this work as a means of social upliftment and of creating "grand possibilities" to achieve "the ultimate settlement of the liquor problem".<sup>24</sup>

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21. G.17-'93, Report of the Government Public Hospitals and Asylums and Report of the Inspector of Asylums for 1891, p.4.

22. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

23. Knox, Victorian Life at the Cape 1870-1900, p.50.

24. CA, A.1696, vol. 2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, pp.2-3.

### CHAPTER 3.

In 1892 many people were in great financial need owing to financial recession.<sup>25</sup> Cape Town had suffered a depression from 1884 to 1887 which had also affected the rest of the Colony in varying degrees. Advances by banks dropped, insolvencies increased and fewer goods were imported.<sup>26</sup> The general downward spiral of the economy also affected the wine industry, which had simultaneously suffered from the devastation of Phylloxera vastrix which had invaded Western Cape vineyards.<sup>27</sup> As employers of one-third of the labour force in the Western Cape, the farmers were a valuable source of revenue in good times and massive unemployment and financial loss in bad times. The Cape Government therefore felt it was an industry to be assisted and protected<sup>28</sup> and was not sympathetic to the protests of the CC.WCTU that the health, mental well-being and financial status of the population would benefit by stopping the sale of liquor.

Realizing that unemployment and poverty encouraged the use of alcohol, the prevalence of alcoholism amongst the poor in the Cape Colony thus stimulated the CC.WCTU to begin temperance work. The unemployed had more time to spend at canteens, commiserating and drowning their sorrows and at only tuppence a bottle even the poorest could scrape together the money to buy cheap wine.<sup>29</sup>

The Temperance Campaign addressed the problem of the lack of education relating to the use of cheap alcohol and pointed out

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25. The Cape Argus, November 17 1892, p.2, col.4.

26. Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa, Vol.4, (London, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1971), p.199.

27. Giliomee, "Aspects of the Rise of Afrikaner Capital and Afrikaner Nationalism in the Western Cape 1870-1915", p.68.

28. *Ibid.*, p.64.

29. Knox, Victorian Life, p.51.



### CHAPTER 3.

that this type of alcohol was a stimulant and thus unhealthy.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the Liquor Laws Commission had confirmed that many of the cheap wines and Cape spirits were adulterated by additives such as vitriol, bluestone, arsenic, tobacco and other stimulants. The greed of the retailers was generally blamed for this unhealthy practice.<sup>31</sup>

Despite all the efforts of the Temperance Campaign from 1876 to 1902, the sales of cheap liquor continued to rise, due to rapid urbanization, immigration and industrialization in Cape Town and its surroundings.<sup>32</sup> From the 1870s factories, industries<sup>33</sup> and breweries<sup>34</sup> sprang up and attracted cheap labour thereby increasing the demand for inexpensive alcohol. The CC.WCTU was thus confronted with an established and also a burgeoning liquor trade which thrived even in times of economic downturn. The Campaign had to be strengthened and a resolution was accordingly passed "to do all in our power to promote the enforcement of those laws bearing upon the repression of the traffic in alcoholics".<sup>35</sup>

#### 3.2. Coffee Houses, Scientific Education Instruction, Mothers' Meetings and Hospital Work.

The problem of the profusion of licensed and unlicensed liquor outlets was tackled in several ways. Coffee Houses were opened as alternative recreation centres to canteens in which a variety of non-alcoholic beverages were sold. Rooms were set

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30. The Cape Argus, March 29 1892, p.6., col.6.

31. G.1-'90, p.39.

32. John Vivian Bickford-Smith, "Commerce, Class and Ethnicity in Cape Town, 1875-1902", (unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1988), p.24.

33. Ibid., 209.

34. C. Pama, Wagon Road to Wynberg, (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1979), p.9.

35. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

### CHAPTER 3.

aside for games and also stocked with magazines and books. The first two Coffee Houses started in Wellington; one for White workmen and another for Coloured workmen. In Kimberley, an extremely ardent member even turned her private drawing room into a Coffee Room. As she lived opposite a canteen, her plan was to lure customers away into a more a homely atmosphere.<sup>36</sup>

In the records of the CC.WCTU there is no mention of how funds were found to support these Coffee Rooms, nor is it clear whether staff were employed or if members of the CC.WCTU volunteered to serve customers. Whatever the case, the Wellington WCTU Coffee Rooms were so successful that larger premises soon had to be sought. Two rooms in the Commercial Hotel, Wellington, that once housed a canteen and a bottle store were rented and attracted "a great crowd of Coloured people".<sup>37</sup>

To the CC.WCTU the success of the Coffee Rooms was a great temperance victory as the patrons had chosen freely to support a social venue where strict temperance was practised. It was also, however, an achievement that demonstrated the power of the women's movement. The CC.WCTU managed to raise considerable funding for the project. Money was difficult to come by. Abbie Ferguson wrote: "I know Mrs Murray is trying to get a coffee shop opened. It is hard to get people interested enough to help financially or otherwise."<sup>38</sup> The CC.WCTU also ran Coffee Rooms in an efficient and hospitable manner and attracted enough customers to warrant expansion.

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36. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, Afternoon Session, p.2.

37. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, July 22 1896.

38. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, July 9 1891.

### CHAPTER 3.

The success of the Coffee Rooms spurred the establishment of a Scientific Temperance Department. One aim was to prevent children from becoming alcoholics, and the Department thus set out to have Scientific Instruction introduced into schools as a compulsory subject.<sup>39</sup> The WCTU had accomplished this goal in the United States. In the Cape, the CC.WCTU was not as successful: by 1894 only one school (in Grahamstown) had introduced Scientific Instruction into the curriculum.<sup>40</sup> However, by 1899 a few more schools were involved and an annual examination with a prize of ten shillings and six pence was introduced by the CC.WCTU in the hope of encouraging more participants.<sup>41</sup>

The CC.WCTU believed that teaching Scientific Temperance to young children would give "security" to "the rising generation through intelligence".<sup>42</sup> In order to convey this message to children who were not receiving it at school, Young Crusaders Bands and Bands of Hope were formed. Prizes for essays were offered, and children were supplied with crayons and paper to draw diagrams and pictures related to temperance subjects. Charitable institutions and day schools, all catering for the poor were included in the programme.<sup>43</sup>

This work took a considerable amount of organization and time, and refusals by schools to accept Scientific Temperance Instruction as a subject were frequent. However, the CC.WCTU never countenanced failure. Letters were written and

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39. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.19.

40. Ibid., p.27.

41. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, p.40.

42. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.

43. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1895, p.36.

### CHAPTER 3.

deputations tried to persuade school boards, school principals and teachers to include the teaching of temperance and general hygiene in all Cape school curriculums.<sup>44</sup> However, only in 1935, forty years later, was Health Education introduced as a compulsory subject into government schools. The CP.WCTU never claimed that this was their victory but one of its members, Ruby Adendorff, was invited to compile the first syllabus for Health Education for primary schools in the Cape Province. She held the degree of Licentiate of Music from the University of Stellenbosch and a B.Sc. in Health Education from the University of Columbia, U.S.A.<sup>45</sup>

As one of the main aims of all these temperance campaigns was to "uplift" and protect women and children from alcoholism later in life in 1908 a "Cradle "Roll" or the "Little White Ribboners" began for toddlers and babies. There was a slow increase in numbers, indicating that temperance was gaining some support and by 1925 there were two thousand members.<sup>46</sup> A Junior Branch began in Sea Point in 1910 with twenty-five members. This also developed fairly slowly, but showed some progress; by 1924 there were twenty-seven Junior branches throughout the Cape Province.<sup>47</sup>

The WCTU linked the joys and values of motherhood to a life free of alcohol.<sup>48</sup> Ideals of motherhood have been criticized for retarding the growth of feminism by encouraging women to remain at home in a nurturing capacity thus keeping them inferior

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44. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, p.20.

45. The White Ribbon, December, 1989, pp.52-53.

46. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.4.

47. The White Ribbon, 95 (3), September, 1989, p.39.

48. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.127, p.139.

### CHAPTER 3.

to man, and reinforcing their powerless position in society.<sup>49</sup> However, in carrying out the WCTU's motherhood policies, the CC.WCTU believed it was elevating the status of women and thus furthering feminism. In the envisaged world of temperance social reform, the CC.WCTU considered that its programme would lead to all women demanding suffrage to ban alcohol abuse and this was - to the CC.WCTU - the ultimate means of protecting women, children and the stable home. With the removal of poverty and alcohol abuse women and children would no longer be at the mercy of drunken men. They would acquire a better education, thereby empowering them to function as equals to males in society.<sup>50</sup>

Health care was another priority of the CC.WCTU. At Mothers' Meetings, the majority of which were held for the poor, study sessions presented by medical lecturers discussed basic hygiene, the influence of alcohol on the pre-natal child and the hereditary effects on the child whose parents abused alcohol and drugs. Articles by doctors, nurses and other medical specialists were regularly published in the CC.WCTU newspaper, The White Ribbon.

The Union maintained that women should be knowledgeable about the workings of the human body, a topic not generally discussed among Victorians. Being a temperance movement, the Union emphasized how the body and its functions were impaired by alcohol and drug abuse. The CC.WCTU newspaper published articles, quizzes on these subjects and prizes were offered to stimulate interest.<sup>51</sup> Life-size working models of body organs

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49. Spender, Women of Ideas, p.262;

Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.133.

50. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.124, p.129.

51. The White Ribbon, Issues, 1915-1930.

### CHAPTER 3.

were used in demonstrations, into which coloured water and alcohol were poured and the resultant degeneration of the organ illustrated visually. These models were of great value when lecturing to children and illiterate or poorly educated women.<sup>52</sup> The CC.WCTU firmly believed that it was the duty of educated women to instil knowledge into children, young people and particularly to impart it to their poorer, working class and underprivileged sisters. This patronising attitude of the middle-class CC.WCTU towards the working-class, is possibly one of the reasons that the CC.WCTU never attracted a large working-class membership.

No records of attendance survive to indicate just how popular these meetings were, but in 1893 for example, the Cape Town Union reported that it was running "one Mothers' Meeting for poor women, which goes on regularly".<sup>53</sup> By 1897 more Unions in the Cape Colony were engaged in this work,<sup>54</sup> thus indicating that these meetings were serving needs in the Colony.

Health care was indeed vital at the time. The mortality rate for infants was extremely high and far higher than that recorded in Great Britain at the same period.<sup>55</sup> Insanitary conditions throughout the Colony contributed to the high infant mortality rates. Those in towns throughout the Colony ranged from merely satisfactory in the middle and upper class White

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52. These models can be viewed at the CP.WCTU Headquarters in Observatory, Cape Town.

53. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1894, p.54.

54. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, p.15.

55. G.14-'93, Report on Public Health, 1892, p.xvii.

### CHAPTER 3.

areas to disastrous in working-class White, Coloured and African districts. Cesspools were often situated close to drinking water supplies and there was little effort to remove nightsoil regularly, especially in African communities.<sup>56</sup>...Under such conditions the CC.WCTU's Scientific Temperance Instruction classes on basic hygiene were undoubtedly beneficial to people who lived in these poorer class districts.

Talks and demonstrations on the preparation and preservation of healthy and inexpensive food also assisted women from the poorer areas who attended these meetings.<sup>57</sup> Meat was contaminated in many towns, where butchers shops and slaughter houses were dirty.<sup>58</sup> To make matters worse, in at least ten towns, these insanitary buildings were often located in residential areas. Dairies were also a health risk, especially to babies, as insanitary conditions were so bad in half the dairies in the Colony that they were condemned with the threat of closure if conditions did not improve.<sup>59</sup>

In 1894-1895 there was a high death rate from typhoid fever and an abnormally high death rate amongst Coloured infants because of these insanitary conditions.<sup>60</sup> Whilst the educational work of the CC.WCTU was obviously not capable of preventing epidemics such as typhoid fever, the basic health rules that it taught were aimed at preventing epidemics from spreading and at lowering the high rate of infant mortality.<sup>61</sup> Thus the CC.WCTU

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56. G.14-'93, Annual Report on Public Health, 1892, pp.iv-vi.

57. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, pp.15-16.

58. G.14-'93, p.xi.

59. Ibid., p.x.

60. G.24-'95, Report of the Medical Officer for the City, Dr E. P. Fuller, 1895, p.209.

61. G.11-'93, Annual Report on Public Health, 1892, pp.xl-xii.

### CHAPTER 3.

health instruction programme filled a need in instructing women in basic health care.

In furthering its temperance message and relating alcohol to ill-health, the CC.WCTU obtained as much expert knowledge as possible to bolster its arguments about the ill-effects of intemperance on the body. In the 1890s Abbie Ferguson and Anna Bliss invited Dr Jane Waterston, the only practising woman doctor in Cape Town at that time, to lecture at the Huguenot College.<sup>62</sup>

Dr Jane Waterston strongly supported temperance work and the CC.WCTU. She had gained her views on the effects of drunkenness first hand from working at Somerset Hospital, Robben Island and in the slums of Cape Town. Before coming to the Lovedale Mission Station she trained as a missionary in England. Her religious convictions were obviously in sympathy with those of the CC.WCTU and she also regarded drunkenness as "a social and moral evil".<sup>63</sup>

The CC.WCTU branched out of temperance and health work at times, and in order to alleviate some of the misery of mentally and physically ill patients whether in institutions or confined to their homes, the CC.WCTU started the WCTU Flower Mission in the Cape Colony. The bedridden were entertained by choirs, solo singers and recitations.<sup>64</sup> Boxes of fruit, clothing and flowers were sent to the inmates on Robben Island. From January to October 1893, three hundred bouquets of flowers were sent to Robben Island leper colony by the Wellington "Y's". All these

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62. CA, V11, vol.2/1, Letter A. Bliss to A. Ferguson, August, 1894.

63. Lucy Bean and Elizabeth van Heyningen, eds, The Letters of Jane Elizabeth Waterston, (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1983), p.203.

64. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.48.



### CHAPTER 3.

gifts were decorated with a white ribbon, the emblem of the WCTU denoting their values of purity and temperance. To reinforce their message the CC.WCTU also attached an appropriate religious text to each parcel.<sup>65</sup>

#### 3.3. The Department for Soldiers and Sailors.

In the 1890s there were several military garrisons in the Cape Colony. In addition, the ports of Simonstown, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London were used by the British navy as well as by British and foreign merchant ships. The CC.WCTU decided to form a Department to distribute temperance leaflets, booklets and books to soldiers and sailors. To entice sailors away from public houses, Temperance Tearooms were established in which temperance books were available in foreign languages as well as English. The proceeds of the sale of refreshments from the East London Union's Tearoom, were put into a building fund for a Sailors' Rest Home.<sup>66</sup>

The outbreak of the South African War intensified the work of the CC.WCTU amongst soldiers because military personnel increased so greatly at that time. Cape Town women formed a "Tommys Welcome to the Cape" Committee which provided entertainments, food and refreshments.<sup>67</sup> Although the CC.WCTU had begun its Department for Soldiers and Sailors in 1891, before the South African War more work had been done among sailors than soldiers. The reason for this was that army chaplains, soldiers missions, and the Salvation Army, preached temperance and evangelism to the

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65. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, p.31.

66. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, p.41-42.

67. Knox, Victorian Life, p.172.  
1891, P.4.

### CHAPTER 3.

army, thus providing - in the opinion of the CC.WCTU - an adequate service.<sup>68</sup> However, with the influx of British troops at the commencement of the South African War, the CC.WCTU felt it had to become more involved.

The intensely patriotic spirit of the English-speaking CC.WCTU in its support of Britain also contributed to this decision but more significant was the CC.WCTU's view that the army was full of "souls waiting to be saved". Even before 1899 the CC.WCTU appealed to its members to assist the Soldiers and Sailors Department to convert soldiers to Christianity and temperance. The sentiments of the sanctity of motherhood, religious fervour, hatred of alcohol and patriotism were all brought to bear to encourage the required response. The appeal was addressed to "the mother-hearts of our sisters", who were exhorted to "let the sight of a redcoat be a never-failing call for a thought of prayer on their behalf."<sup>69</sup>

Although owing to martial law the CC.WCTU was not able to hold conventions during the South African War and there were restrictions on travel as well as bubonic plague in Cape Town, its work amongst the armed forces continued and indeed expanded. The "Y's" even extended their "Flower Mission" to include wounded servicemen, singing to them and taking advantage of a larger audience to whom to distribute temperance literature. At musical evenings for servicemen, temperance pledges were taken.<sup>70</sup>

For obvious reasons, the efforts to convert soldiers

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68. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.31.

69. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 9th Annual Convention, 1898, p.56.

70. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, pp.44-46..

### CHAPTER 3.

generally met with the approval of army officers. Lord Wolseley maintained that soldiers were far more efficient, cheerful, healthy, and courageous when they were allowed little or no liquor. He cited the British troops in the Zulu War as having been extremely efficient, because they drank "more tea and sugar than grog". Temperance also lessened theft of liquor from army stores.<sup>71</sup>

The Duke of Connaught, third son of Queen Victoria and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India from 1886 to 1890, told Mary Leavitt on her visit to India that in his opinion, "nearly all the disease in India in the troops was traceable to drink."<sup>72</sup> Lord Roberts was of a similar opinion, adding that alcohol consumption greatly affected their performance in their duties as soldiers. During his campaigns in the Sudan, Lord Kitchener enforced prohibition amongst his troops.<sup>73</sup>

However, despite this pro-temperance outlook on the part of senior army officials, prohibition was only enforced in the latter half of 1902. Although pleased with this decision the CC.WCTU realised that this was a temporary wartime measure and resolved to carry on its fight for total prohibition after the end of the War.

Another military project started by the CC.WCTU at the end of the war and more related to feminism than prohibition, was the collection of funds which were donated to the British Army to assist released women prisoners. On this occasion as most of these prisoners were Boer women,<sup>74</sup> the CC.WCTU put into practice

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71. The Cape Argus, August 12 1892, p.5, col.5.

72. The Cape Times, June 8 1889, p.3, col.9.

73. The White Ribbon, November, 1914, p.6.

74. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1892, p.30.

### CHAPTER 3.

the WCTU code of Christian clemency and bonds of sisterhood despite political differences.<sup>75</sup>

World War I involved the CP.WCTU again in work among soldiers and sailors, and it took advantage of every opportunity to spread the message of temperance. Comfort bags were made for the forces, containing "sewing kits, plaster for wounds, good motherly letters, the New Testament, leaflets on the dangers of tobacco and alcohol, and Pledge Cards".<sup>76</sup>

The army in Cape Town allowed the CP.WCTU to set up "dry " refreshment stalls in army camps where non-alcoholic beverages and homemade cakes were sold. Military authorities welcomed these stalls, because the CC.WCTU ascertained the dates of arrivals of new recruits and was present to offer refreshments to thirsty and travel-weary men. Similar stalls were later set up at the Cape Town docks which operated during arrival and departure times of naval ships. Temperance literature was also handed out to all servicemen at these stalls.<sup>77</sup>

The CP.WCTU helped in other ways too. Owing to the influx of military personnel, accommodation was in short supply at the Wynberg Military Camp. In order to alleviate the stress of enforced delays, before accommodation could be found, the CP.WCTU booked halls for troop accommodation, engaged helpers to move heavy baggage and provided entertainments and non-alcoholic refreshments.<sup>78</sup> By involving themselves in these projects, the women of the CP.WCTU gained administrative and business skills far beyond that of the ordinary housewife of the time. Moreover,

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75. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.115.

76. The White Ribbon, October, 1912, p.3.

77. Ibid., October, 1914, p.2.

78. Ibid., p.6.

### CHAPTER 3.

members had to organise their time schedules to the armed forces arrivals and departure times. Thus reorganising their priorities and household duties came second to the CP.WCTU duty roster.

Many of these volunteer duties were, however, of the kind that were called "women's work", i.e., providing refreshments and the sewing of garments for servicemen, and "looking after the men" by opening their own homes to accommodate and entertain troops. Chaperoned "socials" with young ladies were held and the Sea Point Union provided quiet rest rooms for weary servicemen.<sup>79</sup> Also within the scope of "women's work" was charity fund raising and the CP.WCTU used these funds to buy a hospital bed which they donated to the South African Overseas Contingent and created a homely atmosphere by hanging pictures of Table Mountain over every hospital bed.<sup>80</sup>

Although these responsibilities empowered the CP.WCTU women, all these activities were within the orbit and experience of woman's traditional "role" of nurturing the sick, feeding, clothing and ministering to the creature comforts of men. But it is important to appreciate that in the process they had to raise funds, manage time schedules and develop the ability to interact with a wide range of people. They were also forced to make independent decisions and accept responsibility for activities outside their sheltered domestic environments.

Wartime conditions caused the CP.WCTU to intensify its Temperance Campaign. Drunkenness was rife, as the population swelled with visiting armed forces. During 1914 there were one

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79. The White Ribbon, October, 1914, p.6.

80. CA, A.1696, vol.1/3, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, December 17 1915, p.17.

### CHAPTER 3.

thousand and three hundred arrests made for public drunkenness.<sup>81</sup> New Zealand soldiers convalescing in Cape Town were so disruptive and so frequently drunk, that the CP.WCTU formed a special sub-committee to liaise with various Church councils to combat these disorderly New Zealanders.<sup>82</sup>

#### 3.4. The Press Department, Raisin and Grape Drives, and the Anti-Narcotics Campaign.

Because in its drive for temperance the CP.WCTU needed to reach as wide an audience as possible, a Department of Literature and Influencing the Press began in 1891<sup>83</sup> and in 1892 a separate Press Department was established.<sup>84</sup> Given the low educational standard of colonists of both sexes, who had no formal or higher education this Department arranged valuable propaganda among working-class people. The CC.WCTU also claimed to be "elevating the moral tone of the press", by making it part of a social reform programme.<sup>85</sup>

Two Cape Town Unions were successful in persuading The Cape Times, The Cape Argus, Die Volksbode and The S.A. Pioneer, to feature a regular temperance column. Amy Roberts, a Kimberley Union member, published regular articles in The Friend of the Free State and in The Bechuanaland News. The Burghersdorp Union news was published in its local newspaper and the Graaff-Reinet Union in The Christian Express. Not all editors were pro-temperance, however. The Grahamstown Union for example, met

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81. The White Ribbon, April, 1915, p.3.

82. CA, A.1696, vol. 1/3, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, December 17 1915, p.6.

83. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.4.

84. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 3rd Annual Convention, 1892, p.81.

85. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.44.

### CHAPTER 3.

with initial resistance from its local newspaper editors, who at first refused to print any temperance items.<sup>86</sup>

During the South African War there were no regular temperance columns in newspapers.<sup>87</sup> Although temperance reports never made front-page news and were published only sporadically, the CC.WCTU believed that publicity was vital to the success of the Temperance Campaign. To engender fresh enthusiasm amongst members a competition for a "Press Banner" was started in 1906 between Unions for the most newspaper insertions. The Sea Point Union was so enthusiastic that it won the prize for six years in succession, from 1906 to 1912.<sup>88</sup> Besides the propaganda value for the Temperance Campaign, publication of these articles also made the views of women known and read and the CC.WCTU encouraged members to air their views on social reform in the newspapers.

An effort was also made to cripple the wine industry by trying to induce the public to buy so many currants, raisins, fresh grapes and fruit juices that there would be little over for the wine industry. "Raisin Week" was inaugurated in 1923, and was successful in selling raisins but it did not hinder the production of wine.<sup>89</sup> In 1924 the CC.WCTU extended its campaign into a "Raisin Month", which became an annual event in April each year. The CC.WCTU encouraged the public to buy raisins and currants by printing recipes and articles in newspapers and magazines and holding lectures on the nutritive value of these fruits. Camps were even held for children where they could taste

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86. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.43.

87. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902. p.46.

88. The White Ribbon, March, 1912, p.9.

89. Ibid., January, 1925, p.4.

### CHAPTER 3.

products containing currants and raisins.<sup>90</sup> Not surprisingly, the Dried Fruit Board supported the CP.WCTU promotional work and provided substantial funding.<sup>91</sup>

The Raisin, Grape and Fresh Fruit Juices drives all fell under the CP.WCTU's Department for Unfermented Wine, the aim of which was to educate the public on the uses of unfermented grapes, in the hope that the wine industry would suffer. The CP.WCTU attempted to affect the wine industry by using raisin, grape and fresh fruit juices to show the public the benefits of using unfermented products. Enticing prizes were offered for competitions involving fruit juices, which were published in popular magazines, such as Homestead and The Farmers Weekly.<sup>92</sup>

The CC.WCTU tried to set personal examples in promoting non-alcoholic drinks. Anna Bliss of the Wellington WCTU, bought five hundred American vines and joined the Fruit Growers Association to encourage the sale and cultivation of table grapes in competition with wine grapes.<sup>93</sup> Abbie Ferguson and the staff of the Huguenot Seminary attended a lunch at Government House where alcohol was served. Naturally the Seminary staff drank only water and fruit juices and were "shocked" to observe Sir Gordon Sprigg, whose wife was a CC.WCTU supporter, heartily imbibing a variety of alcoholic drinks.<sup>94</sup>

Not everyone appreciated the stand made by these temperance workers who drank non-alcoholic beverages at social functions. Instead of making converts, this type of behaviour often caused

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90. The White Ribbon, October, 1925, p.12.

91. Ibid., August, 1925, p.11.

92. Ibid., January, 1925, p.4.

93. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Bliss to M. Ferguson, August, 1894.

94. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, June 9 1889.



### CHAPTER 3.

antagonism towards temperance work. A complaint was published in The Cape Argus in 1891, that while most people respected the beliefs of teetotallers, the reverse did not always apply. Dinner parties could become an embarrassment when teetotallers either attempted to pressure their host and guests into their beliefs or sat dry-mouthed during the meal.<sup>95</sup> Belonging to the CC.WCTU therefore was not always easy, and members had to develop the courage to stand their ground in the face of peer pressure and social conventions. It was also important that they promoted their beliefs diplomatically or they risked retarding the growth of the Temperance Campaign.

When the Department of Unfermented Wine reviewed its progress in 1930, it reported that there had been a considerable increase in the production of dried fruit and grapes for non-alcoholic purposes, but was disappointed that it had not been able to change the fact that wine grapes still sold best.<sup>96</sup>

The CC.WCTU also tried to persuade churches to use unfermented wine at Communion services. Believing that this would be a relatively easy task, the Union sent nine hundred letters to churches of all denominations in 1897.<sup>97</sup> All the Wesleyan and Congregational churches complied. The serving of unfermented wine at communion services in the Dutch Reformed church was not made uniform by the Synod and only the Three Anchor Bay DRC served unfermented wine.<sup>98</sup> Although in 1914

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95. The Cape Argus, March 3 1891, p.6, col.4.

96. The White Ribbon, December, 1930, p.4.

97. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, p.24.

98. Pers. comm. Archivist Dutch Reformed Church, Cape Town, 6 December, 1993.

### CHAPTER 3.

the Anglican Church promised to look into the matter,<sup>99</sup> this practice was never adopted.<sup>100</sup> To the CC.WCTU this was a great disappointment as it felt that all churches should set the example of condemning alcohol of any kind in order to achieve a higher moral order in society.

The temperance cause included more than mere alcohol abuse. It was a call for a "purer life" and the CC.WCTU also worked from the outset to prohibit tobacco and all drugs. Leavitt presented medical evidence when she came to Cape Town from the U.S. that smoking was as deleterious to health as alcoholism, a view which was shared by others.<sup>101</sup> The state of Michigan, for example, banned cigarettes after anti-tobacco lobbyists had convinced the state that excessive smoking led to "physical degeneracy" in young men and girls.<sup>102</sup>

The CC.WCTU also connected compulsive smoking and alcoholism with ill-health and poverty. Certainly drinking and smoking went together. In 1880 it was found in a survey in the Cape that 197 out of 208 alcoholics in retreats in the Colony were heavy smokers.<sup>103</sup>

Nonetheless, world opinion had not yet come around to agreeing on the harmful effects of smoking. German scientists at the time maintained that smoking was not universally injurious and that a few simple tests would ascertain whether the individual could smoke without harm to their health.<sup>104</sup> Judging from the many newspaper advertisements in 1891, and the wide

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99. The White Ribbon, January, 1914, p.4.

100. Pers. comm. Archivist Church of the Province, Cape Town, 6 December, 1993.

101. The Cape Times, May 30 1889, p.2, col.6.

102. The Cape Argus, December 10 1891, p.2, col.2.

103. The Cape Argus, October 1 1891, p.6, col.4.

104. Ibid., March 21 1891, p.3, col.2.

### CHAPTER 3.

variety of cigarettes and tobacco on sale, smoking was indeed a popular pastime in Cape Town and many people saw no harm in the habit.<sup>105</sup> The government of the Colony also opposed CC.WCTU's views on tobacco and encouraged the growth of a local tobacco industry, offering cash prizes to both growers and manufacturers.<sup>108</sup> The CC.WCTU Anti-Narcotics Department was therefore faced with having to do battle with a potential source of Cape Government revenue as it did with wine.

Although the CC.WCTU had included narcotics and tobacco on its list of banned substances, from the outset in 1889, it began a formal Anti-Narcotics Department only in 1902, mainly because it had been unable to find a willing Superintendent for this "arduous work".<sup>107</sup> Enthusiasm for the anti-smoking drive was slow and in 1897 only two CC.WCTU members attended an Anti-Tobacco Rally in Cape Town, although other centres had a better attendance.<sup>108</sup> The CC.WCTU was concerned by this lack of interest and sought advice from the WCTU which offered to share its expertise in supporting an "international sisterhood".<sup>109</sup> A circular letter was posted to all the WCTUs of the world requesting advice on the most effective way of running the CC.WCTU's Anti-Narcotics Department.<sup>110</sup>

After the South African War, the CC.WCTU affiliated itself to the "Boys of Africa Anti-Smoking League" of Mowbray. Leaflets were sent to mothers requesting them to encourage their sons to

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105. The Cape Argus, December 22 1892, p1, cols. 1-2.

106. G.48-'94, Report of the Colonial Tobacco Experts, p.2.

107. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, pp.72-73.

108. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, p.27.

109. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, pp.114-115.

110. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, p.73.

### CHAPTER 3.

give up the "evil of smoking".<sup>111</sup> But even despite these efforts the CC.WCTU complained in 1914 that cigarette smoking was rapidly on the increase amongst young men. It saw the cause of this in prolific advertising and noted that tobacco companies gave away satin flags and flowers inscribed with cigarette brand names, which were used by women as decorations at public occasions and even in their own homes. The CC.WCTU attempted to stop this practice which it feared obviously would persuade many more young people to take up smoking.<sup>112</sup>

The CC.WCTU of course, was unable to stop the smoking habit and by 1922 the South African tobacco industry was firmly established.<sup>113</sup> In the late 1920s the CC.WCTU became alarmed at the growing number of women smokers and approached the Department of Health requesting that warnings be issued to pregnant mothers on the dangers of smoking, a move which met with no response.<sup>114</sup>

Dagga, opium and any other habit-forming drug were on the CC.WCTU's list of substances that should be banned by the State. Even yeast was attacked because a variety called "Palestine Bees", when added to water which had been mixed with sugar, produced a brew three times more potent than beer. Called "Bee Wine", this became a fashionable drink with young people in the 1920s and cases were reported where imbibing to excess had been fatal.<sup>115</sup>

Anti-narcotics leaflets on the dangers of tobacco, drugs and "Bee Wine", were distributed to hospitals, factory employees,

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111. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, pp.72-73.

112. The White Ribbon, March, 1928, p.10.

113. The Standard Encyclopedia of South Africa, Vol.10, p.516.

114. The White Ribbon, March, 1928, p.10.

115. Ibid., May, 1914, p.2.

### CHAPTER 3.

Bands of Hope and Young Crusaders. The CC.WCTU's idea in this campaign was to rehabilitate the addicted, make the factory machine operator aware of the dangers of drug-induced drowsiness and to prevent the very young from experimenting with drugs.<sup>116</sup> Members were asked to set an example to the community by boycotting medicines which contained alcohol. To emphasize the importance of this message, the CC.WCTU published statements by local and international physicians in the temperance columns of local newspapers.<sup>117</sup> Louis Pasteur was quoted as saying that "men who drank are more difficult to cure if bitten by a mad dog, than those who abstain."<sup>118</sup>

The CC.WCTU set out to reach as many sections of society as possible by its campaign against alcohol and drug abuse. Publicity and propaganda were vital aids to the CC.WCTU in its aim to "Educate" society, thereby uplifting all mankind.<sup>119</sup>

The thread of social upliftment through education runs through all the CC.WCTU's educational work, and even Coffee Rooms, as we have seen, were supplied with educational temperance literature. The strategies of the Temperance Campaign were aimed at changing social values and also improving health and education. The CC.WCTU strongly believed that intemperance could lead to poverty, disease and insanity.

Temperance was - as the name of the Union indicates - its main reason for existence and all efforts were devoted to it. For example, the mission to soldiers and sailors while rendering charitable works which boosted the military morale, served as

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116. The White Ribbon, October, 1914, p.8.

117. The Cape Argus, March 29 1892, p.6, col.6.

118. Ibid., August 31 1892, p.6, col.5.

119. The White Ribbon, March, 1915, p.6.

### CHAPTER 3.

a means of propagating the Temperance Campaign. These benevolent ministrations spread the message of the CC.WCTU Temperance Campaign to a wide audience of soldiers and sailors of differing nationalities and from different stations in life.

The Scientific Temperance Education Department with its outreach programme to mothers and children, performed a social service by linking temperance to good health and improved standards of living. In doing so the CC.WCTU stepped outside middle-class society and came into contact with the poor and the working-classes. Although these strategies were well within traditional "women's work", they made CC.WCTU members move out of their confined family and social circle. In the process of interacting within a larger public sphere, CC.WCTU women had to develop the courage to express their views publicly, often in opposition to male opinions.

A major proportion of CC.WCTU work was aimed at educating and raising the living standards of women as well as lending moral support to all their "sisters". Whereas all temperance societies endeavoured to help the woman as a victim of male liquor abuse, the CC.WCTU in addition, concentrated its energies on the upliftment of all women as victims of male social and political power. At the base of the constant striving for a utopian temperance society therefore, can be identified the desire for women to be equal to men in all spheres.<sup>120</sup>

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120. The White Ribbon, Supplement to February, 1930, p.1.

THE CONTROVERSIAL TACTICS OF THE TEMPERANCE CAMPAIGN  
THEIR EFFECT ON THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN THE CAPE

While the temperance activities explained in the previous chapter aimed directly to reduce the use of alcohol and to educate the public - particularly women - into a healthy life-style, there was a more aggressive and feminist political programme in which the CC.WCTU became involved. This was the matter of female suffrage. The deprivation of not being able to vote was appreciated by the CC.WCTU when, in 1891, it realized that real political power, i.e. the vote, was required before a women's organization could do anything to alter legislation in any significant way. It therefore adopted the WWCTU franchise campaign, which inter alia, involved the expedient use of temperance to encourage conservative women to fight for the vote.<sup>1</sup> The franchise campaign also endeavoured to make women aware of their rights and encouraged them to fight for them.<sup>2</sup> In this way the CC.WCTU joined the world women's Suffrage Movement and thus was involved in the origins of modern feminism.<sup>3</sup> And by joining the WWCTU franchise campaign the CC.WCTU aligned itself to the more "controversial" and aggressive tactics of WCTU worldwide policies.<sup>4</sup>

4.1. International Petitions.

To deal with the Franchise Campaign a Department of Legislation and Petition began in 1891, whose work centered initially around drawing up numerous petitions to further the temperance cause. In the process of doing so, members of the CC.WCTU

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1. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.221.
  2. Ibid., p.223.
  3. Chafetz & Dworkin, Female Revolt, p.26.
  4. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.124.

## CHAPTER 4.

acquired a training in campaigning as an organized pressure group for temperance aims but also for women's rights. Some of the first petitions signed by the CC.WCTU were, however, international WCTU petitions protesting against the sale of rum in the Belgian Congo and the proposed sale of intoxicants at the World Fair held in Chicago in 1893.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most important petitions signed by the CC.WCTU was the Polyglot Petition started by Frances Willard, leader of the WWCTU, in 1886 before the Cape Union was inaugurated.<sup>6</sup> By 1898 seven million temperance supporters throughout the world had signed this Petition. One of its objects was to launch an international protest against the sale of opium and alcohol and in particular British trade with both India and China in these commodities.<sup>7</sup> Willard hoped that temperance women would be drawn to join this protest and thus forge international bonds between women temperance workers. She also saw the opportunity of recruiting new members to the WWCTU.<sup>8</sup> In this she succeeded in the Cape Colony.

By signing the Polyglot Petition, the CC.WCTU aligned itself to an international attack by the WWCTU on British revenue derived from the sale of liquor and drugs.<sup>9</sup> This placed the CC.WCTU in an invidious position, as, particularly in the Western part of the Cape Colony, the liquor industry was a mainstay of colonial revenue,<sup>10</sup> (as explained in Chapter 3).

The WWCTU was fully aware of this problem, but Mary

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5. CA., A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1892, p.1.

6. Ibid., p.1.

7. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.39.

8. Ibid., p.38.

9. Ibid., pp.148-147.

10. Giliomee, "Aspects of the Rise of Afrikaner Capital", p.64.



## CHAPTER 4.

Leavitt during one of her first lectures in Cape Town in 1889, made it quite clear that by signing the Polyglot Petition the CC.WCTU did not intend disloyalty either to the British or to the Cape Colonial governments. On the contrary, the WWCTU saw the reform of society by the Temperance Campaign as an integral part of imperial loyalty, and as the duty of Britain and English-speakers everywhere to set high moral standards.<sup>11</sup> In terms of progress towards a true feminist viewpoint, signing the Polygot Petition forged strong international bonds and was an overt protest against abuses inflicted on females.<sup>12</sup> Although these international petitions were not drawn up by the CC.WCTU itself, the wording was of value as they were used as blueprints for local petitions.

### 4.2. Local Petitions, 1889 to 1899.

Petitions were assigned to the Department of Legislation and Petition,<sup>13</sup> the official motto of which was "no sex in citizenship". This states the WCTU's official feminist stand for women's rights very clearly.<sup>14</sup> By adopting this slogan the CC.WCTU became the first women's organization in the Cape Colony to express its dissatisfaction with the inferior political position of women and to work for suffrage.

From its inception, the Department of Legislation and Petition realized that to make any impact on government, a professional approach had to be adopted and one of the first steps was to supply each Union with a copy of the liquor laws. Any queries on procedure were referred to lawyers for advice to

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11. The Cape Argus, May 30 1889, p.2, col.6.

12. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.39.

13. CA., A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.4.

14. The White Ribbon, January, 1925, p.10.

## CHAPTER 4.

ensure the utmost efficiency and professionalism to change the legislation.<sup>15</sup>

After studying the legislation the CC.WCTU decided that one of the most effective thrusts would be to join forces with other temperance societies to have "Local Option" made law.<sup>16</sup> This was one of the fundamental strategies of the Prohibition campaigners in the United States, and the idea was to collect enough votes to enforce prohibition in so many areas that eventually "dry areas" would be in the majority. In this way temperance workers would have an overwhelming say in the laws on alcohol and related matters.<sup>17</sup>

Provision for "Local Option" legislation in the Cape Colony was made in 1891 when stricter amendments, proposed by James Rose-Innes, were made to the Liquor Licensing Act originally passed in 1883.<sup>18</sup> If a petition signed by two thirds of the registered voters in any Divisional Council district, municipality or ward protesting against the issue of a new liquor licence was handed in four days before any new application's hearing, that application would be refused.<sup>19</sup>

Understandably, the liquor industry with its vested interests opposed this proposal, resenting being held "in the power of the voter". Bottle store owners contested the curtailment of hours of sale under these amendments, maintaining

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15. CA., A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 3rd Annual Convention, 1892, p.78.

16. CA., A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.22.

17. Blocker, Alcohol and Reform in Society: The Liquor Issue in Social Context, (Westport, etc., Greenwood Press, 1979), p.114.

18. Wright, Sir James Rose-Innes, Selected Correspondence, p.114.

19. W. Boscowan Wright and Courtney C. Sheppard, The Liquor Laws of the Cape of Good Hope 1883-1894, (Cape, Town and Port Elizabeth, J. C. Juta & Co., 1896), p.61.

#### CHAPTER 4

it caused serious financial losses which they could ill afford.<sup>20</sup> Wine farmers, already reeling from the devastation of Phylloxera, maintained that the new Liquor Bill's stipulation that they could only sell liquor in specified outlets deprived the wine farming community of the <sup>21</sup> more profitable informal outlets for their produce. Many Cape parliamentarians found merit in these arguments and attempted to have this Bill set aside.

John X Merriman, M.P. for Namaqualand, Treasurer for the Cape colonial government and wealthy wine farmer, took issue with the temperance cause.<sup>22</sup> He was to prove a formidable opponent to the CC.WCTU because he was the antithesis of all this organization stood for.<sup>23</sup> Not only did he support the wine farmers in every way but female suffrage was anathema to him, especially when advocated by pro-temperance women.

He constantly denigrated the CC.WCTU, comparing women's advice to brandy, declaring that both were "two capital things but you must use them very cautiously". Despite the increasing evidence, he also believed that women did not want equality with men, nor did they deserve the vote because they did not fight wars. Jacob de Vos M.P. for Worcester, and James Sivewright, M.P. for Griqualand East, agreed with Merriman in his views.<sup>24</sup>

However, not all Members of Parliament were as antagonistic. Joseph Orpen, M.P. for Wodehouse, was amenable to a qualified franchise and proposed that women who owned property

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20. The Cape Argus, July 1 1891, p.5, col.5.

21. Ibid., July 28 1892, p.6, col.5.

22. Ibid., December 26 1889, p.2, col.6.

23. Cameron & Spies, An Illustrated History of South Africa, p.19

24. Debates of the House of Assembly of the Cape of Good Hope, (CH), 4th Session, 8th Parliament, 1892, pp.253-254.

#### CHAPTER 4.

to the value of £100 or had passed the elementary school examination or earned £50 or more per annum should get the vote. David Christian de Waal, M.P. for Piquetberg, Herbert Tamplin, M.P. for Victoria East, and William Hay, M.P. for Victoria East, supported Orpen's proposal and Hay even added that women rendered extremely useful service in times of war.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the views of these men, opposition to suffrage was powerful and did not deter the CC.WCTU from working for the franchise or "Local Option". The attempt by the CC.WCTU to alter liquor legislation played an important role in developing women who were not afraid of confronting authority.

First the CC.WCTU attacked Anders Ohlsson, founder of the successful Ohlsson's Breweries at Newlands, a well-respected man whose growing enterprise provided steady employment. An entire village had sprung up around Ohlsson's Breweries for the many immigrant skilled workers brought out from Britain. The brewery magnate even built and endowed St Andrews Church.<sup>26</sup> To the CC.WCTU Ohlsson was a threat, because he was also a Member of Parliament and a powerful temperance opponent. In 1893 Ohlsson proposed a Bill for longer liquor sales hours on Saturdays and for opening canteens on Sundays.<sup>27</sup> Petitions and deputations were made by the CC.WCTU to aid Schreiner who led the vote against this Bill and the power of the temperance advocates ensured that Sunday closure laws remained in force. Although this was a success, the CC.WCTU was becoming politically experienced and realized that these laws could be rescinded

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25. CH, 4th Session of the 8th Parliament, 1892, p.254.

26. R. R. Langdon-Carter, "The New-Lands, a Church and the Breweries", The Talk of the Tavern, September 1978, p.2.

27. Wright, Sir James Rose-Innes, pp.114-115.

## CHAPTER 4.

at any time.<sup>28</sup>

For more than forty years, between 1890 and 1930, the CC.WCTU women presented a barrage of petitions to government in pursuit of suitable Local Option Clauses. In the course of this long and ultimately unsuccessful quest the CC.WCTU found that if members personally presented petitions and were seen to be attending Licensing Court sessions there was more likelihood of success. The first appearances meant running the gauntlet of social disapproval because it was then thought unseemly for women to protest in public. The CC.WCTU noted that in 1897 the East London WCTU "bravely" sent volunteers to appear before the Licensing Court, in order to await the result of their petitions, which in this event proved successful. In the same year twenty-eight petitions came from Unions all over the Colony, some as far away as Aliwal North and Bizana. These petitions did not only involve signatures from Union members but also from the general public, often collected from door to door and in public places.<sup>29</sup> CC.WCTU workers were thus obliged to become more aggressive in their behaviour and to be prepared for censure when they broke tradition in stepping out of their protected domestic environment. Before this, women had never been involved in such actions in the Cape Colony.

Members who worked for the Department of Legislation and Petition found that they could no longer afford to conform to the shy, self-effacing image of ideal Victorian femininity. They had to be seen in public advocating their cause, often in the face of

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28. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention 1893, p.28.

29. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, p.49.

#### CHAPTER 4.

opposition. Even other temperance workers considered Leavitt and her Women's Christian Temperance Union to be "extremists" when compared to other temperance societies in the Colony. Nevertheless one person at least admitted to being favourably influenced by Leavitt's stand and WCTU policies.<sup>30</sup>

The reputation of the WCTU in the United States had by the early 1890s gained an international reputation as a fearless and vociferous advocate of temperance, purity and above all, women's rights. The WCTU attacked social, political and legal systems and was viewed as "extremist" in its pursuit of suffrage and its "Do-Everything Policy".<sup>31</sup>

One of the skills encouraged by the organization was public speaking which at that time was frowned upon by polite society. As has been explained in Chapter 2, CC.WCTU leaders were excellent public speakers. In 1889 the newly formed CC.WCTU sent its President, Virginia Lee Pride, as chief speaker of the CC.WCTU delegation to the South African Temperance League Convention held in Cradock. Her speaking proficiency earned her a seat at every session on major policy discussions and she was invited to read several papers before a large audience. Even the local newspapers wrote complimentary reports of this rare occurrence, a woman being asked to speak in public, being consulted on her views and giving advice.<sup>32</sup>

The temperance arena was, however, a safe and protected environment surrounded by empathetic people where women were encouraged, even in mixed gender societies, to present their

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30. G1-'90, Minutes of the Liquor Laws Commission, 1889-91, p.78.

31. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.78-80.

32. CA, V11, vol.2/1. Letter A. Cummings to Home Friends, October 15 1889.

#### CHAPTER 4.

views whatever their rank in the organization's hierarchy.<sup>33</sup> But to have any real effect, the CC.WCTU had to be prepared to make public appearances in adverse temperance and in many cases, anti-feminist circumstances. With the motto "Organise, Educate and Agitate" the CC.WCTU believed that its mission was to the intemperate, anti-temperance and anti-suffragism section of the population. Taking into consideration the antagonism displayed towards suffrage<sup>34</sup> and "respectable" middle-class women speaking out in public on controversial issues,<sup>35</sup> it took a considerable time for women in general even in temperance circles to overcome the restrictions of social norms and personal fears and convictions to do so.<sup>36</sup>

The CC.WCTU records reflect that it encouraged all members to participate in public speaking. This produced women who adopted leadership roles, and who had the confidence to present their argument for women's causes and rights. It is particularly their public demands for women's "rights" which identify the CC.WCTU with feminism. The WWCTU has been called a proto-feminist organization by Epstein because it never fought for women's "rights", only for women's "causes", and it never publicly allied itself with the suffrage movement.<sup>37</sup> The CC.WCTU records, however, show otherwise: that women in the Cape felt they had "a right to petition" and to demand "civil rights

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33. SAL, Independent Order of the Grand Templars, Journal of the Proceeding of the 3rd Session of the Grand Lodge of South Africa at Grahamstown, 1876, pp.i-ii.

34. CH, 4th Session of the 8th Parliament, 1892, pp.352-354.

35. Schoeman, Only an Anguish to Live Here, p.91, p.101, p.102, p.105.

36. Tyrrell, Women's World/Women's Empire, p.16.

37. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, p.145.

## CHAPTER 4.

for all".<sup>38</sup>

Because of social pressure becoming involved in petition work was more popular among union members than speaking out in public. All Unions regularly submitted petitions, obtaining signatures from members and the general public. Meeting the public in this way meant the possibility of rebuffs, but shows that members were prepared to step beyond the values of their social circle.

There were, however, rewards to such aggressive tactics. As early as 1892, the effects of the first petitions in support of Rose-Innes's Bill for tightening the Liquor Laws could be gauged. For example, offenders were more readily arrested. Just over half a column in The Cape Argus of 9 November 1892,<sup>39</sup> is filled with prosecutions for illegal liquor sales compared to the November to December 1891 editions which featured no liquor prosecutions at all.<sup>40</sup> The Innes Bill also prevented boarding houses from selling liquor, even to monthly boarders.<sup>41</sup>

But small successes were not enough and even when temperance amendments were introduced into the legislation the CC.WCTU was seldom satisfied. Total prohibition was their aim and new petitions were constantly submitted to this end. Members had to have a thorough knowledge of all the legislation. Careful study made Union women familiar with parliamentary voting and legislative procedures. They therefore had a knowledgeable basis on which to assess the effectiveness of these laws with relation to temperance, women's rights, and protection of women and children.

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38. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.39.

39. The Cape Argus, November 9 1892, p.5, col.3.

40. Ibid., November to December, 1891.

41. Ibid., December 3 1892, Second Edition, p.5. col.1.



#### CHAPTER 4.

American WCTU member, Alice Palmer, who stayed in the Cape Colony from 1889 to 1894 as an organizer for the CC.WCTU, reported that "A Member of Parliament and champion of your Bill, said to me today: 'the WCTU has come to the front, it is arriving at social and political power'. When we want anything done for the elevation of the people we can always find the CC.WCTU."<sup>42</sup>

Schreiner was a great ally of the CC.WCTU and members gave him tremendous support. Petitions, deputations and protests were frequently made to aid Schreiner against the Ohlsson Bill of 1893 for Sunday closure.<sup>43</sup> These frequent deputations made CC.WCTU women proficient at lobbying and conversant with legislative procedure. The CC.WCTU then decided in 1897 that the time was ripe to begin a Department of Franchise, for "educating women as to their rights" on how to "increase their power" and "ultimately obtain the vote".<sup>44</sup> This was an extremely important step in the direction of a real feminist perspective.

In the same year the Innes Liquor Bill was first proposed. It was, however, amended and only promulgated in 1898 as Act 28. This had a totally racial temperance slant because it attempted to enforce total prohibition on the "natives" - all the non-white people - of the Cape Colony. No liquor was to be sold at railway refreshment rooms to Africans. Moreover, only Africans in possession of an existing retail or bottle store licence would be allowed to buy liquor. But these traders would have had no outlet amongst their own people because the Bill allowed that

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42. CA., A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.35.

43. Wright, James Rose-Innes: Selected Correspondence, pp.114-115.

44. CA., A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, p.13.

#### CHAPTER 4.

"only employers (White) may buy liquor for Natives, no other person may".<sup>45</sup> Although this Bill would curtail the already limited freedom of non-whites, the CC.WCTU did not oppose it, envisaging the Innes Bill as the start of total prohibition for all in the Cape Colony.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, the CC.WCTU objected that there were loopholes in the Liquor Bill which allowed Whites to benefit, particularly farmers practising the "tot" system. Nevertheless, it presented twenty-eight petitions in favour of the Bill in 1897 on the grounds that it was stepping stone to prohibition. The CC.WCTU's bias was not on racial grounds but directed towards the intemperate, the anti-temperance movement and anyone who did not accept middle-class Christian values. When the Bill was rejected by Parliament in 1897 the CC.WCTU pledged its further support when it was raised again in 1898.

One of the reasons that the CC.WCTU was spurred on to fresh activity was the fact that the Cape Colony, at the time, was the only South African Colony which did not restrict the sale of liquor to Africans.<sup>47</sup> For the Union, this indicated a dereliction of Christian duty and WWCTU principles, as well as more importantly perhaps, a lack of control over Africans who had not accepted middle-class values. The WWCTU believed implicitly that it was the duty of every Christian White to "uplift" and "civilize" the other races by converting them and that temperance was essential in this process. Another reason why the CC.WCTU

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45 GG, Supplement to the Government Gazette of the Cape of Good Hope, 8091, 8.1.1899, pp.2-3, (GG. abbreviation for the Government Gazette for the Cape of Good Hope).

46. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 9th Annual Convention, 1898, p.57.

47. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, p.50.

## CHAPTER 4.

supported this Bill was that it made the CC.WCTU feel that it had earned a place amongst the "aggressive organizations" in its attempt to "agitate, organise and educate" the public.<sup>48</sup>

When the amended Innes Bill was finally passed by a majority of nineteen in 1898, the CC.WCTU remained dissatisfied because it believed that the law would be difficult to enforce. However, merely a year after its promulgation, the CC.WCTU quoted magistrates in the Cape Colony reporting a noticeable decline in cases of Africans being arrested for drunkenness.<sup>49</sup> The CC.WCTU thus felt that a significant step had been taken towards its goal of achieving temperance amongst Africans. Furthermore, the CC.WCTU belief in the link between crime and alcohol seemed to be supported when the magistrate of Aliwal North declared that there were fewer prisoners for all crimes since the Innes Act. Moreover, the Grahamstown Union proudly announced that drunkenness among Coloureds and Africans in the locations was increasingly rare and attributed this to the massive petition sent in by the CC.WCTU in support of the Innes Bill, which carried "great weight" and achieved almost total prohibition in the area.<sup>50</sup>

The CC.WCTU also felt that the Act vindicated accusations that the WWCTU was naive in maintaining that laws could make people sober and quoted the profits of "a large brandy company" having declined by 3 per cent because of the Innes Bill.<sup>51</sup>

The determined support given to the Innes Bill by the CC.WCTU was one of the campaigns which gained for the CC.WCTU a

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48. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, p.9.

49. CA, A.1898, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, p.35.

50. Ibid., p.35.

51. Ibid., p.55.

## CHAPTER 4.

growing reputation among temperance and other church societies for setting goals and working extremely hard to attain them.<sup>52</sup> The international link to the WWCTU undoubtedly helped. As early as 1890, a Presbyterian minister said that he was glad that "the women who were turning the world on its head had representatives in South Africa."<sup>53</sup> At a Wesleyan Church Convention in Grahamstown in 1897, the CC.WCTU was commended for having inspired women church groups to extend their work in temperance, social and moral purity and generally to take part more readily in the affairs of the community.<sup>54</sup>

### 4.3. 1898 to 1912. Municipal votes, the Light Wines Bill, Act 8 of 1907, establishment of the Women's Enfranchisement League and School Board Elections.

Despite the CC.WCTU's inspiration in encouraging women's church and other temperance groups as well as its own members to participate in community affairs and the Union's temperate efforts, by 1902 the CC.WCTU had still not achieved its ultimate goal of total prohibition. More and more it seemed that women's suffrage was required before this would come about, and the campaign to this end was fraught with difficulties.

The wealth and political power of the liquor industry was a huge stumbling block to the temperance and suffrage campaign. It was dominated by monopolies in wine farming and in beer brewing. The breweries were a particular temperance target because they installed retailers in the newest, largest buildings and gave them advertising and financial support until they became

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52. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, p.55.

53. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, Afternoon session, p.3.

54. SAL, Minutes of the 15th Convention of the Wesleyan Church, 1897, p.146.

#### CHAPTER 4.

profitable. Moreover, the breweries paid any fines for contravening the liquor laws and, according to the CC.WCTU, thus flouted the law.<sup>55</sup> As has been mentioned, both the breweries and the wine farmers had powerful representatives in Parliament.<sup>56</sup>

Another problem was that at the end of the South African War Merriman's simplistic view that women were useless in war was still being used by many men to exclude women from the franchise. The CC.WCTU dismissed Merriman's argument as a "silly plea" and advocated that if the qualification for franchise was the active bearing of arms during war, then scores of men should have been disenfranchised.<sup>57</sup> Although generally pacifists,<sup>58</sup> the women of the CC.WCTU had even become involved in the South African War, rendering services to both civilians and soldiers as has been explained.

In 1882 women ratepayers in the Cape Colony were the first in Southern Africa to be granted the municipal vote at the discretion of the municipalities, but surprisingly few took advantage of it. The CC.WCTU ascribed this to apathy and lack of awareness and it believed that this neglected vote held great promise. Members were continually urged to use their municipal vote to pressurize the colonial government to give them the wider franchise. By 1902 most towns (excluding Grahamstown and Kimberley), which had CC.WCTU Unions had granted women the municipal vote, although the CC.WCTU cannot be credited with

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55. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, p.54.

56. Wright, Sir James Rose-Innes, pp.114-115.

57. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, p.59.

58. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.171.

#### CHAPTER 4.

pressurizing them to do so. However, discrimination was still rife, because women were not themselves allowed to sit on municipal councils. CC.WCTU policy therefore, was to encourage male temperance candidates to stand for election, with the promise of CC.WCTU voters' support.

Putting this to the test, the CC.WCTU believed that in East London the "women vote" of 1902 had helped a temperance candidate retain his seat.<sup>59</sup> Volunteer workers of the CC.WCTU also assisted in running the campaigns of temperance candidates for the Divisional Council and mayoral elections.<sup>60</sup>

Until 1906 the CC.WCTU was the only women's organization in the Cape Colony with a practical knowledge of petitioning, sitting in at parliamentary and municipal debates and of voicing its opinions in public.<sup>61</sup> Yet, in a survey of the woman's suffrage movement Walker has belittled the achievements of the CC.WCTU because she sees its policies as "puritanical" and thus actually stunting the growth of feminism.<sup>62</sup> This is an important point, but, as has been shown, in giving Cape women a platform from which to work for woman's "causes" which could only be successful if women's "rights" were also granted, the CC.WCTU has a very strong claim indeed to being a true "feminist" movement. And in the Southern African context, when compared with the other women's organizations such as the Zuid Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouwen Vereeniging (ACVV), it was clearly progressive and feminist.

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59. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, p.59.

60. Ibid., p.59.

61. The White Ribbon, January, 1912. p.6.

62. Cheryl Walker, 'The Woman's Suffrage Movement in South Africa', B.A. Hons. Essay, University of Cape Town, 1979.

#### CHAPTER 4.

The ACVV did not work for or encourage suffrage and did not approve of its members speaking in public.<sup>63</sup> By contrast the CC.WCTU considered the franchise so crucial that in 1907 it established the Women's Enfranchisement League, (WEL). The first forty members of the WEL and its first president, A. N. MacFayden were from the CC.WCTU.<sup>64</sup> Although the CC.WCTU primarily wished to attract the Christian and temperance-minded women of all religions, atheists and even women who did not support temperance, were invited to join the WEL. This marks a significant step in the growth of feminism because the CC.WCTU realized that in order to achieve any radical changes in the suffrage issue all women would have to close ranks.<sup>65</sup>

Walker also alleges that CC.WCTU's "narrow minded" policies even blocked rapid progress to suffrage and influenced the WEL.<sup>66</sup> The CP.WCTU was almost certainly restrained in its behaviour by its strict adherence to what it saw as the conduct of the moral, Christian woman who did not indulge in public violence. Yet in New Zealand, Australia and the United States this same behaviour did not prevent the early attainment of suffrage.<sup>67</sup> It must also be stressed that the British Women's Temperance Association (BWTA) did not engage in militant behaviour but it took part in marches and rallies and handed in petitions on franchise and ran lectures on suffrage.<sup>68</sup>

Similarly, when the CC.WCTU took part in mass demonstrations

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63. SAL, Pamphlet Collection, ACVV., Feite Omtrent die A.C.V.V., pp.1-3.

64. SAL, The Women's Enfranchisement League of the Cape Colony, 1st Annual Report, 1908, p.1.

65. The Cape Times, April 8 1909, p.4, col.1.

66. Walker, 'The Woman's Suffrage Movement in South Africa', p.23.

67. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.222.

68. Ibid., pp.237-241.

## CHAPTER 4.

in 1908 and 1909, over heated temperance issues, these were peaceful protests. Again temperance and suffrage were linked when the Light Wines Bill (later Act 8 of 1907) was introduced. In 1881, Gladstone, then British Prime Minister, had allowed French light wines to be sold in England. He believed that this was a temperance measure because these wines were less intoxicating than spirits and could be drunk at home rather than in public houses.<sup>69</sup>

The Cape Colony followed Britain by the Liquor Laws Licensing Act of 1883 which provided for the sale of light wines in grocery stores.<sup>70</sup> Later in 1907, when the wine industry was adversely affected by the general depression in the Cape Colony,<sup>71</sup> N. F. de Waal, M.P. for Colesburg, proposed a Bill that would increase the sales of light wines and other liquor by extending the hours of sale and allowing farmers to sell freely any amount of liquor on their own premises to all races.<sup>72</sup> De Waal also proposed the flood of temperance campaign petitions be curtailed and that no member of a temperance society be eligible to sit on a Select Committee on liquor affairs.<sup>73</sup> To this end the Cloete Act (Act 8 of 1907) was passed, and raised a storm of protest from temperance societies. Even the African Political Organization of Queenstown sent a telegram of protest to their M.P., T. Searle, describing the Cloete Act as "diabolical" as it would lead to increased drunkenness amongst Africans.<sup>74</sup>

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69. Shiman, Crusade against Drink, p.184.

70. Wright & Sheppard, The Liquor Laws of the Cape of Good Hope, p.64.

71. CH, 4th Session of the 11th Parliament, 1907, p.534.

72. Ibid., p.532.

73. GG, 9072, 5.6.1908, p.1628.

74. CH, 4th Session of the 11th Parliament, 1907, p.534.



#### CHAPTER 4.

At the same time, in 1907, the CC.WCTU was faced with renewed attacks by the anti-suffrage faction led by Merriman, then Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. A male chauvinist, he strongly condemned the ever-increasing ventures by women into public life, declaring that a "woman's place is in the home", and "women's duty is to perpetuate the race" giving the submissive Boer women as suitable role models for far more assertive women to follow. He singled out the CC.WCTU for special attack, denigrating the "Home Protection" policy during the South African War, as well as the formation of the WEL.<sup>75</sup> Faced with the opposition of the most powerful leader in the Colony, the CC.WCTU had to invent new tactics in the fight for suffrage so that the newly formed WEL would survive.

One of the first actions of the CC.WCTU was to join ranks with Ettie Stakesby-Lewis, a CC.WCTU member, who inaugurated the Women's 1907 Temperance Campaign, which drew women from many organizations together in a public confrontation with authority. The following year CC.WCTU members took part in a protest march to the Houses of Parliament where two petitions were delivered, one of which included 2,700 signatures.<sup>76</sup> As it was correct in every legal requirement the petition had to be accepted by the Cape Parliament.<sup>77</sup> This was an important moment for feminism in the Cape Colony because for the first time many women had joined forces to display publicly their anger at a law being forced on them in which they had no say. The large size of the petition indicated their resentment at attempts to curtail one of the few avenues of voicing public protest at man-made laws.

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75. Ibid., p.98.

76. Stapleton, A History of the WCTU, pp.16-17.

77. CH, 4th Session of the 11th Parliament, 1907, p.4.

#### CHAPTER 4.

The mass demonstration bore fruit. Cronwright Schreiner, M.P. for Beaufort West, a woman's suffrage supporter, in Parliament cited this deputation as one of the reasons why women should be entitled to vote. Contrary to accusations of the "hysterical" behaviour, these women had displayed "dignity and self-restraint", Schreiner gave his opinion (not quite able to rid himself of Victorian prejudice), that these Cape women were fitter to vote than the more militant suffragettes who frequently gave way to displays of uncontrolled behaviour in Britain.<sup>78</sup>

The double standard of gender behaviour common at the time was demonstrated by the furore raised by the wine farmers over the Light Wines Bill. A "great" deputation of representatives from the wine industry held a protest rally in Cape Town in 1909 culminating on the steps of the Cape Parliament where "extraordinary scenes" were enacted and "methods of agitation unknown to the city before" were used by a "howling demonstration" of wine farmers.<sup>79</sup> Yet Merriman and his cabinet did not find their behaviour hysterical, indeed they saw it as the wine farmers' right to have their views heard by Parliament. Accordingly, when this deputation demanded an audience with Merriman it was granted, while the women were refused. The farmers insisted that the Prime Minister give into their demands as "bankruptcy stares the farmers in the face", as they felt their industry was "threatened" by the temperance movement.<sup>80</sup>

Significantly, one of the threats was the growing power of temperance campaigners as "the use of alcohol had diminished not only through your temperance societies" but also the Temperance

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78. The Cape Times, April 15 1909, p.6, col.6.

79. Ibid., p.6, col.6.

80. Ibid., p.6, col.6.

## CHAPTER 4.

Campaign's strategy of drinking tea, coffee or beef tea at morning teas and luncheons instead of wine.<sup>81</sup> Another temperance threat to the wine industry was the Local Option Clause in the Light Wines Bill which the farmers demanded be removed as they feared too many areas would be voted as "dry areas". Emotions on both sides ran high. One debate in the House of Assembly lasted fifteen hours, ending only at 05:15.<sup>82</sup> Even the City Council of Cape Town became involved in what it felt was a matter important enough to be put to the Council vote. The result was that the majority of the councillors voted in favour of retaining the Local Option Clause.<sup>83</sup>

A British wine expert, Lord Blyth, was requested by Parliament to compile a report on the Cape Wine Industry. This was an attempt to settle accusations by the temperance faction that the product marketed as "light wine" actually had a strong alcoholic content. Blyth's report showed that temperance workers were correct in that the ideal light wine should emulate the French light wines which contained less than 12% alcohol, while the South African wines of 15% alcohol content were "too heavy" to be labelled as light wines.<sup>84</sup>

The CC.WCTU and other temperance women seized on this as a line of attack and again supported Stakesby-Lewis, when in 1909 she reactivated the Women's Temperance Campaign in order to fight the Light Wines Bill.<sup>85</sup> The years of campaigning had taught the CC.WCTU the need for careful planning. When launching a campaign it included as many other related goals as possible in the hopes

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81. The Cape Times, April 15 1909, p.6, col.6.

82. Ibid., November 13 1909, p.5, col.6.

83. Ibid., October 29 1909, p.7, col.8.

84. Ibid., July 2 1909, p.5, cols.6-7.

85. Ibid., October 22 1909, p.8, col.8.

## CHAPTER 4.

of overall success. Stakesby-Lewis therefore included a renewed effort to retain the Local Option Clause and a protest against a proposed wine bar on Cape Town station. As barmaids would be employed to serve liquor, the opportunity was taken to protest against the employment of women in what the CC.WCTU regarded as a degrading environment.<sup>86</sup>

The CC.WCTU attitudes towards barmaids can be regarded as maternalistic. Maternalism is seen by Spender<sup>87</sup> and Epstein<sup>88</sup> as having retarded the growth of feminism in that women were encouraged to remain mothers and homemakers. Yet although the CC.WCTU carried its policy of the "betterment of the home" with it into the WEL, it certainly resented the "old gag 'a woman's place is in the home' is being used against us with such rhetorical effect".<sup>89</sup> The WEL explained that although the majority of the members were married with children, they were extremely capable of running a home efficiently and also working for suffrage and other causes which involved public speaking and duties. It made them "no less womanly" than the women who devoted themselves exclusively to running their homes.<sup>90</sup> The CC.WCTU and WEL fostered the confidence in women that they had a right to a life outside their homes.<sup>91</sup> They were proving the feminist precept that women were capable of running a home and participating in public affairs, as well as entering the business or professional world on equal terms with

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86. The Cape Times, October 22 1902, p.8, col.8.

87. Spender, Women of Ideas, p.262.

88. Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity, pp.132-133.

89. SAL, Annual Report of the WEL, 1908, p.3.

90. Ibid., p.3.

91. SAL, Women's Enfranchisement League Pamphlets, E. Woods, The Home Keeper's Vote, 1907, pp.3-5.

## CHAPTER 4.

men.<sup>92</sup> By its involvement with the WEL the CC.WCTU propagated this view to a wider circle of women in the Cape Colony.

There were, however, contradictions to these principles; for example the Women's Temperance Campaign ended in a march through the streets of Cape Town in October 1909 in protest at any loosening of liquor legislations.<sup>93</sup> At the end of the march, Emilie Solomon urged the crowds at the City Hall to lobby for legislation banning the employment of barmaids,<sup>94</sup> not realizing that although this form of employment was degrading for women, employment was needed and some women were unqualified to do other work.

Yet when women's suffrage began to be considered seriously, the CC.WCTU protested against discrimination against working-class women when it objected to the high educational qualifications proposed. It was concerned that only a few White women and hardly any Coloured women could gain an education equal to men. Setting income levels at £50 per year excluded most Coloured women who only earned an average of £1 per week and all women married in community of property would also be excluded.<sup>95</sup>

The CC.WCTU therefore campaigned to have women appointed to School Boards to ensure better educational opportunities for women and the teaching of temperance and purity. A milestone was reached for the CC.WCTU, and incidentally also for feminism, in 1909 when the first woman appointed to the School Board in the Cape Colony was a CC.WCTU member, Mrs Beaumont Rawbone.<sup>96</sup>

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92. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.68:

Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.139.

93. The Cape Times, October 22 1909, p.8, col.8.

94. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.57.

95. SAL, The Home Keepers Vote, p.2.

96. The Cape Times, September 9 1909, p.8, col.2.

## CHAPTER 4.

Rawbone's election was due to support from women's groups, who canvassed from door to door and on election day, stopped each voter asking them to cast their vote for Rawbone, in "a ladylike manner".<sup>97</sup> In the event Rawbone received the most votes, 1,132, next in line was the Rev. Alfred Philip Bender with 1,013. All other candidates polled under 1,000 votes each. The newspapers were not gracious about Rawbone's victory, claiming it to be the result of the majority of the voters and canvassers being women and to the fact that only one tenth of the electorate voted.<sup>98</sup>

Rawbone's success inspired the CC.WCTU to send out detailed instructions to each Union on voting procedures with the request to remain loyal to Rawbone as the existing candidate while trying to encourage women to follow Rawbone's example.<sup>99</sup> However, no other contemporary women's group in the Cape Province produced a candidate and in 1914 Rawbone was still the only woman on the School Board.<sup>100</sup>

The CP.WCTU scored another advance for feminism when the first woman, Lady Searle of the CP.WCTU, was appointed to the Hospital Board of Cape Town.<sup>101</sup> Thereafter Amy Searle (granddaughter of Thomas Searle), of the Great Brak River WCTU was appointed to the Mossel Bay Board, on which she served for twenty-five years.<sup>102</sup>

These successes were achieved by peaceful protest but Tuttle criticizes the WCTU because it failed to emulate the radical and

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97. The Cape Times, September 8 1909, p.9, col.7.

98. Ibid., September 8 1909, p.9, col.7.

99. The White Ribbon, October, 1912, p.4.

100. The Cape Argus, October 8 1914, p.6, col.7.

101. Jean St Leger Lawrence, Coming Home to Roost, (Cape Town, Gryphon Press, 1986). p.85.

102. Margaret Franklin, The Story of Great Brak River, (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1975), p.186.

#### CHAPTER 4.

aggressive behaviour of the British suffragettes.<sup>103</sup> The CC/CP.WCTU never condemned this behaviour but it also never followed suit. A cartoon in The Cape Times, 17 April 1909, shows "disgusted suffragettes storming out" of a gallery after hearing Merriman's opinion on the unfitness of women to vote.<sup>104</sup>

The Union of South Africa in 1910 brought some hope to the CC.WCTU that their goals would be more easily achieved as Merriman, the arch enemy of suffrage and temperance was no longer Premier of the Cape. Political union had its effect in co-operation in other spheres and in 1911 a Federation was formed between the WCTU of the four new provinces. This combined organization became known as the South African Women's Christian Temperance Union, which had its own president and officers.<sup>105</sup> The WCTU of each province continued to have its own officials. The main focus of work remained on the individual problems of each province, but there was a broadening of scope when provincial WCTU's combined on national temperance issues. The CC.WCTU changed its name to the Cape Provincial Women's Christian Temperance Union (CP.WCTU) but retained its policy of peaceful protest.<sup>106</sup>

Emilie Solomon blamed the radical behaviour of the British suffragettes on the Asquith cabinet who ignored them and failed to give them any audiences.<sup>107</sup> Yet the attitude of the Union government was not much more encouraging. Smuts, although personally sympathetic to female suffrage did nothing to further

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103 Tuttle, Encyclopedia of Feminism, p.356.

104. The Cape Times, April 17 1909. p.9, cols.3-7.

105. The White Ribbon, September, 1989, p.40.

106. Ibid., October, 1912, p.3.

107. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.239.

#### CHAPTER 4.

its cause.<sup>108</sup> Botha granted the WEL audiences, praised women's contribution to South African society and said they deserved the vote but by 1914 still thought "the time had not yet come to give the vote".<sup>109</sup>

Although there were never public displays of physical aggression, the CP.WCTU's terminology was assertive. Members were urged to become more militant as "far too much ambulance work was being done" and not enough visible attack and action was being produced.<sup>110</sup> Mary Brown of the CP.WCTU wrote of the "right" and the "power" of women to vote,<sup>111</sup> and there were aggressive slogans like "a woman reformer without a vote is like a soldier without a gun, an army without ammunition."<sup>112</sup>

The non-militant strategy of the Temperance Campaign was an example for the Franchise Campaign. Frequent deputations made the CP.WCTU proficient at lobbying and conversant with legislative procedure. As a result by 1912 the temperance campaign had gained numerous successes. Petitions from the Worcester Union effectively curtailed the hours of liquor sales at a local hotel, while the joint protest of the Observatory Road and Mowbray Unions deterred a prospective licensee from even sending in the licence application. The Stellenbosch Union's petition against an application for a Light Wine Licence succeeded in having it refused.<sup>113</sup>

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108. Piet Beukes, The Romantic Smuts, (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Human & Rousseau, 1992), p.60, p.68.  
109. The White Ribbon, May, 1914, p.2.  
110. Ibid., November, 1912, p.3.  
111. SAL, Brown, A Claim for the Enfranchisement of Women, p.10.  
112. The White Ribbon, March 1915, p.3.  
113. The White Ribbon, November, 1912, p.10.



## CHAPTER 4.

### 4.4. The Local Veto Bill, the Roos Bill, World War I, Municipal Councils, 1912 to 1920.

In 1912 the CP.WCTU started corresponding with several overseas WCTU's in an effort to learn how they had managed to get Local Veto Bills introduced. Particulars of a model Bill for Local Veto in Scotland were circulated to all CP.WCTU branches in order that petitions be presented to municipalities, Parliament and the Licensing Courts. Local Veto was similar to Local Option, in that voters within a district could prevent new licences being issued but in addition could vote for total prohibition and a closing down of all liquor outlets in their district. By November 1912, twenty-six petitions in favour of Direct Veto and "prohibition to the natives" had been handed to Parliament.<sup>114</sup>

In 1912 the Roos Liquor Bill was proposed to extend the tot system, allow freer trade in liquor to Africans, legalize the sale of "Kaffir Beer" and light wines, grant liquor licences to coffee shops and boarding houses, and extend the hours of sale for liquor and worse still, in temperance eyes, scrap any form of Local Option. In short this Bill would demolish most of the achievements of temperance workers and the CP.WCTU since 1889. This Bill was eventually only passed in 1925 and over this period of 13 years the CP.WCTU continually handed in petitions in order to have it repealed. In its final form, (in 1925) it "emerged shorn of its most dangerous features and laden with some substantial benefits" and the CP.WCTU felt that its volume of work over the years was well rewarded.<sup>115</sup>

Despite the horrors of wartime, World War I proved a

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114. The White Ribbon, November, 1912, p.10.

115. Ibid., April, 1927, p.10.

#### CHAPTER 4.

rewarding period for temperance workers because most governments were more open to arguments that intemperance endangered the safety of both civilians and soldiers. The plan to prevent hotels and boarding houses from selling liquor and to shorten the hours of sale was one of the World War I temperance issues to which the CP.WCTU lent its strong support. At the time there were 184 licensed liquor outlets for the Cape Town population of 67,130, i.e. one licence for every 165 males over the age of 14.<sup>116</sup>

A petition signed by 888 people, including members of the CP.WCTU in Cape Town, was presented at the annual meeting of the Licensing Courts in 1915 urging the restriction of hours of sale for liquor. The CP.WCTU wanted an influential spokesperson, and approached the ebullient and strong-willed Lady Phillips, wife of Sir Lionel Phillips the Rand gold mining magnate.<sup>117</sup> Lady Phillips was not a CP.WCTU member as she lived in Johannesburg but made frequent trips to Cape Town. Her many interests included charity, social work, suffrage<sup>118</sup> and temperance.<sup>119</sup> The effects of drunkenness during war time disturbed her immensely and appearing for the CP.WCTU, she admonished the Court that those who were the victims of intemperance, as well as those who sanctioned it, were being unpatriotic and putting the country at risk.<sup>120</sup> She also spoke on behalf of the CP.WCTU at a public meeting held in the Cape Town City Hall on the benefits of prohibition.<sup>121</sup>

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161. The White Ribbon, November, 1912, p.10.

117. *Ibid.*, April, 1915, p.3.

118. Thelma Gutsche, No Ordinary Woman, (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1966), p.310.

119. *Ibid.*, p.310.

120. The White Ribbon, April, 1915, p.3.

121. Gutsche, No Ordinary Woman, pp.329-330.

#### CHAPTER 4.

The CP.WCTU was marginally gratified with its efforts at the Licensing Courts hearing of 1915 when, with the exception of 24 residential or central hotels, all other hotels and licensed houses lost one trading hour. The canteens in the disreputable Wells Square of Cape Town were additionally penalized by having to close down two hours earlier than canteens in other areas of Cape Town.<sup>122</sup>

The feminist approach of the CP.WCTU can also be seen in its World War I Temperance Campaign. Curiously under Martial Law the sale of liquor was prohibited to women but not to men. The CP.WCTU was incensed and wrote a letter to the Magistrate of Cape Town denouncing this sexist legislation. The letter pointed out that while the CP.WCTU was grateful that this ruling protected women from becoming alcoholics, the authorities had perpetrated an injustice to women. To the CP.WCTU this law implied that the authorities saw drunkenness in women as a great threat during wartime, when in actual fact men were the worst abusers of alcohol in times of war and peace. The CP.WCTU demanded that total prohibition should be enforced on men instead of the few liquor laws in force under Martial Law, (as discussed in Chapter 3), which hardly curtailed male drunkenness at all.<sup>123</sup>

The CP.WCTU felt it was important to interest young girls in the suffrage campaign with the hope that when suffrage was granted they would be knowledgeable voters. To this end the Huguenot Seminary formulated school contests which demanded a knowledge of parliamentary and municipal procedures, debates and law. The CP.WCTU link between temperance, improvement of social

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122. The White Ribbon, April, 1915, p.3.

123. CA, A.1696, vol.1/3, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, August 2 1918, pp.2-3.

#### CHAPTER 4.

conditions and suffrage was also stressed and contestants had to have a particular knowledge of the liquor laws and conditions in prisons.<sup>124</sup>

The few war-time temperance laws were, however, temporary, and in the long term the CP.WCTU had little success with any permanent liquor restrictions. But more lasting and arguably more politically significant results were achieved by the CP.WCTU's suffrage campaign. During World War I the CP.WCTU took advantage of the absence of enlisted men to empower women by lobbying to have women made town councillors. The Women's Enfranchisement League was approached and added its weight to this campaign.

So that more women would be eligible both to vote and to be elected as city councillors, the CP.WCTU suggested that the Municipal Act of 1882 should be amended to read "that qualifications for Municipal candidates be based simply on citizenship rather than on property."<sup>125</sup> So important to the CP.WCTU was this issue that it decided to create a special branch to work for this cause.<sup>126</sup>

In 1918 the efforts of the CP.WCTU and other enfranchisement movements in South Africa bore fruit. The Cape Provincial Council legislated that women were eligible as municipal councillors. However, it took a considerable time, seven years, for the first CP.WCTU member to achieve this. Mrs Anderson was the first woman councillor to be elected on to the Port Elizabeth

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124. CA, A.1696, vol.1/1, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, October 4 1916, p.8.

125. CA, A.1696, vol.1/1, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, March 31 1916, p.7.

126. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, October 4 1916, p.8.

## CHAPTER 4.

town council. As well as being a CP.WCTU member she was also the Honorary Secretary for the Child Welfare in Port Elizabeth.<sup>127</sup> The most important aspect of the achievement of women councillors was that, unlike the temperance liquor laws, this was a permanent step to women's right to equality.

### 4.5. American Prohibition, the Roos Bill, The Women's Enfranchisement Bill, and Suffrage: 1920 to 1930.

When in 1919 prohibition was enforced in the United States, it provided great inspiration to the CP.WCTU who saw it as the beginning of the end of the international liquor trade. The signing of a liquor treaty between Great Britain and the United States that no smuggling of British liquor would be allowed and the election of Lord Astor as Prime Minister of Great Britain, raised the CP.WCTU's optimism. The CP.WCTU hoped that under Astor's strongly temperance orientated British government, prohibition would become law and as part of the British Commonwealth, the Union of South Africa would soon follow suit.<sup>128</sup>

However, by 1924 there was no indication of change in the Cape Province, and the liquor laws which had been in force for forty years still stood, with little amendment in favour of temperance. By 1928, the prospect of prohibition still remained remote as Tielman Roos, then Minister of Justice, succeeded in having a new Act passed without a Local Option Clause. When in 1929 the CP.WCTU at last began to realize that prohibition in the United States had failed because of the vast illicit liquor trade and the crime it had caused, the CP.WCTU remained loath to relinquish its goal of prohibition. It still exhibited the

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127. The White Ribbon, March, 1925, p.8.

128. Ibid., April, 1924, p.1.

#### CHAPTER 4.

driving faith and optimism in its members that had sustained the CP.WCTU for thirty years.<sup>129</sup>

The contribution and work of the CC/CP.WCTU to the temperance campaigns from 1889 to 1928, was steady, voluminous, meticulously planned and dedicated. But it was not entirely successful because it did not achieve its goal of total prohibition. However, the sheer number of petitions, deputations, letters, telegrams and rallies during this period strengthened the hand of the Temperance Alliance of South Africa and considerably altered the course of several Liquor Acts. In drawing up and obtaining signatures to these numerous petitions, the members of the CP.WCTU were forced to interact more frequently with the public. To advertise their cause, they also had to make more public appearances and speeches which led to significant feminist and political achievements in raising consciousness and politicizing the goals of temperance. Simultaneously, they politicized women's rights to alcohol free homes and public places, and demanded that family income be spent on education and nutrition. Moreover, the right to sit on School Boards, and the right to election to Municipal Councils had been achieved. The CC.WCTU and its successor, the CP.WCTU laid the basis of feminism in the Cape by encouraging women to demand equal rights.<sup>130</sup>

The CP.WCTU had gained status too and in 1926 was one of only six women's organizations chosen to appear before the Select Committee on Enfranchisement for Women which enquired into the

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129. The White Ribbon, May, 1929, p.7.

130. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.55.

#### CHAPTER 4.

removal of "sex disqualification from the franchise laws."<sup>131</sup>

The CP.WCTU stood out from other women's groups in objecting to Coloured and African women being debarred from the franchise. The Nationalist Women's Party would countenance neither African nor Coloured women being granted the franchise. The Women's Enfranchisement Association Union, the Women's Enfranchisement League, the South African Association of University Women and the National Council for Women were also not prepared to fight for African women to have the franchise.<sup>132</sup> In respect of the Coloured women's vote they wished this to be granted but not at the expense of the White women having to wait a few more years for the franchise. But when it was put to Emilie Solomon that the CP.WCTU's insistence on the African vote was futile as there were moves afoot in parliament to enforce racial segregation, she replied that although not ideal, the CP.WCTU would still insist on African women having the vote in their own segregated councils.<sup>133</sup>

The deeply engrained WCTU temperance and evangelist ideals could not condone barring Coloured and African women from the franchise. As a Cape organization, the CP.WCTU was proud that "the franchise in the Cape Province is colour-blind", and attempted to persuade Parliament that it should remain.<sup>134</sup>

The CP.WCTU made one final bid for the franchise for all women when it suggested that an educational test would be the least discriminatory means of qualification, as there were

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131. Reports of the Select Committees of the House of Assembly of the Union of South Africa, Report on Women's Enfranchisement 1926, by the Committee appointed by the 3rd Session of the 4th Parliament, 1926, vol.III, p.iii.

132. Ibid., p.61, p.66, p.71, pp.72-73, p.78, p.83.

133. Ibid., p.3.

134. The White Ribbon, December 1928, p.9.

#### CHAPTER 4.

Coloured and African women who were well educated.<sup>135</sup> When the franchise was granted in 1930 to White women, after 30 years of campaigning for equal rights for all women, there was a split in the CP.WCTU on the issue. Some members were content with suffrage for White women. They reasoned that the interests of Coloured and African women would be better served by the White women's vote because White women were more knowledgeable about the needs of women than male voters.<sup>136</sup> Other members followed the lead of Emilie Solomon who was still campaigning in 1936 for the right of educated African and Coloured women to the franchise.<sup>137</sup> The official CP.WCTU reaction was a pledge to improve conditions for women, to address the issues affecting Coloured and African women, and it began extensive lobbying for better economic, health and housing conditions for all women.<sup>138</sup>

It can therefore be claimed that the CC/CP.WCTU Temperance Campaign played a leading part in White women achieving the franchise in the Cape. However, in order to achieve better social and economic conditions for all women, the CC.WCTU came to rely on another WWCTU campaign, the Purity Campaign, which was waged side by side with the Temperance Campaign in the Cape. As will be seen in Chapter 5 the Purity Campaign also played an important role in the progress towards achieving feminism, suffrage, and female emancipation.<sup>139</sup>

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135. The White Ribbon, December, 1928, p.9.

136. Ibid., December, 1930, p.1.

137. Carson, Emilie Solomon, p.89.

138. The White Ribbon, December, 1930, p.1.

139. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.200.



THE PURITY CAMPAIGN AND ITS IMPACT ON  
THE GROWTH OF FEMINISM IN THE CAPE COLONY

From its inception in 1889 the CC.WCTU became involved in "social purity" work.<sup>1</sup> Of all the WCTU endeavours, the Purity Campaign was the most closely attuned to the attainment of women's rights and made important contributions towards the growth of feminism in the Cape. In the work of the WWCTU this became its most important international campaign.<sup>2</sup>

The two main aims of this Campaign were the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDA) and the raising of the Age of Consent. The CDA were a series of laws passed by the British Parliament between 1884 and 1889 to prevent the spread of venereal diseases amongst the armed forces. As discussed in Chapter 2, it was from her "rescue" work amongst prostitutes in Liverpool that Josephine Butler launched the Purity Campaign to fight the CDA on the grounds of sexist laws which discriminated against women.<sup>3</sup> "Rescue" work to the CC.WCTU meant the redemption of prostitutes through persuading them to give up their trade and to accept Christianity and a pure moral life.<sup>4</sup>

Although there was no CDA in America, "rescue" work among prostitutes was carried out by women's organizations from 1877.<sup>5</sup> The exposure of the trade in child prostitution in Britain by W. T. Stead in 1885 and the work of Josephine Butler in Liverpool influenced the American WCTU to decide that purity work was of

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1. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.192.
  2. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, pp.2-3.
  3. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.65.
  4. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, pp.2-3.
  5. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.193.

## CHAPTER 5.

equal importance to temperance.<sup>6</sup>

Through participation in fighting for the repeal of the CDA in the Cape Colony, the CC.WCTU became more fully aware of the multitude of discriminatory laws against women. Regular correspondence with Butler began, her advice was sought and her views on the CDA absorbed into the CC.WCTU.<sup>7</sup> These views were decidedly feminist as Butler "was not as much concerned with purity but men's injustice to women".<sup>8</sup>

Linked to the repeal of the CDA was another Butler campaign, the raising of the Age of Consent. In becoming engaged in this issue the CC.WCTU joined an international movement which was beginning to recognize that a woman had a right to her own body and was not merely a male chattel.<sup>9</sup>

The CC.WCTU used the Purity Campaign as another lever to demonstrate that women were disadvantaged and only the vote would empower them. Although Frances Willard divided WCTU work into Temperance, Purity and the Franchise, she realized that women who became involved in public work could not make any effective changes without the vote because: "they find they are fighting evil with one hand tied behind them".<sup>10</sup>

### 5.1. The start of the Purity Campaign - American and British Women Missionaries, 1889 to 1893.

In 1889 Mary Leavitt had emphasized the importance of moral reform and purity.<sup>11</sup> However, the Purity Campaign did not attract as much support at first from CC.WCTU members as did the

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6. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.194.

7. CA, A.1696, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, October 27 1891.

8. Petrie, A Singular Iniquity, p.234.

9. Ibid., p.225.

10. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.225.

11. CA, VLL, vol.2/1, Letter A. Cummings to Home Friends, June 4 1889.

## CHAPTER 5.

Temperance Campaign. "Purity" was extremely controversial as women had to discuss issues of sex and prostitution, mix with prostitutes and visit the seedier parts of towns and cities. In 1893 the British Temperance Women's Association had suffered a major split when many members refused to be involved in work which was unseemly to most middle-class women.<sup>12</sup>

The CC.WCTU began the campaign against the CDA with little practical effect. Only the "sympathies" of the CC.WCTU were extended to other societies involved in "rescue" work. The Salvation Army had already established a Rescue Home in Cape Town and the CC.WCTU offered to raise funds to build a new Rescue Home.<sup>13</sup>

When three international leaders of the Purity Campaign visited the Cape Colony in 1891, they impressed upon the CC.WCTU the importance and scope of this Campaign. Dr Kate Bushnell and Elizabeth Wheeler Andrew, American WCTU round-the-world missionaries came to Cape Town in that year. Bushnell, in particular, made a lasting impression on the CC.WCTU by her personal commitment to the standards of Christian purity. Above all it was the courage of these women in speaking publicly on this "difficult subject" that impressed the CC.WCTU, who referred to Bushnell's attitude as "a courage that is not hers, but God's".<sup>14</sup>

Bushnell's explanation of the CDA in England and the Cape Colony was so graphic that Abbie Ferguson declared: "most of us were affronted by the terrible, lamentable nature of these

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12. Bristow, Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1870, (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1977), p.139.

13. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Meeting, 1891, p.3.

14. CA, VLL, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, September 27 1891.

## CHAPTER 5.

laws". One of the most important revelations was that the CDA legalized prostitution. Abbie Ferguson commented that Cape Town was indeed "one of the worst towns in the world normally, but I have not known of the legal sanction of vice", nor was she aware of the "appalling conditions" at the Lock Hospital in Roeland Street. She was also horrified to be told that "about two hundred and fifty girls are marched through the streets of Cape Town to the Lock Hospital to be examined". The CC.WCTU was incensed by this public degradation of women while male clients were protected by law, their names remaining secret.<sup>15</sup>

Another reason for interest in the Purity Campaign in 1891 was that Bushnell and Andrew addressed the second CC.WCTU Convention which was the first to be attended by all Cape Unions, and not only the two founder Unions as had been the case at the initial Convention held in 1890. The Americans therefore reached a wide audience and their message was spread through the Cape Colony when delegates returned home.<sup>16</sup>

The lectures at Kimberley came at a crucial time as prostitution was so rife there that local authorities had proposed introducing the CDA believing that it would stem venereal disease,<sup>17</sup> a notion which was open to much controversy.<sup>18</sup> The CC.WCTU decided it was vital that the American missionaries visit Kimberley because the local authorities "have not the first fact of the Acts, the fact that laws are upon women alone". The deputation was a success and their efforts ensured that the

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15. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, September 27 1891.

16. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 3rd Annual Convention, 1892, p.16.

17. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, January, 26 1892.

18. G.24-'95, p.xli

## CHAPTER 5.

CDA were not introduced in 1891. The following year the CC.WCTU reported that "Dr Bushnell's brave stand probably saved Kimberley".<sup>19</sup>

As Colonial Superintendent of the CC.WCTU, Abbie Ferguson wrote to Butler, Superintendent of the WWCTU Department for Social Purity, informing her that "my soul has been too deeply stirred" by the testimony of Bushnell. In her busy schedule as principal of the Huguenot Seminary, Ferguson set time aside for purity work and Emma Murray, Jnr, took over some of her teaching responsibilities to make the task easier.<sup>20</sup>

In order to gain first hand knowledge of working with prostitutes Ferguson spent a few days in Cape Town with Maria Cleghorn, Superintendent of the CC.WCTU Evangelical and Purity Department,<sup>21</sup> who was also a volunteer mission worker for the Christian Mission (the Rescue Home), where reformed prostitutes were taught "cooking, scrubbing, washing, ironing and needle-work" <sup>22</sup> so that they could find an alternative livelihood. Together with Kitty Shearsby and Maria Cleghorn's daughter, Annie, they visited Assurance Lane, which they thought "one of the worst parts of Cape Town and very sick of immorality". They invited some prostitutes to attend a meeting and planned similar meetings at which a portable organ was played and prostitutes encouraged to sing hymns. The object was to encourage the prostitutes to admit themselves voluntarily to the Rescue Home.

The prostitutes were both Coloured and White and one young

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19. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, January 26 1892.

20. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, October 27 1891.

21. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, December 28 1891.

22. The Cape Argus, March 12 1892, p.8, col.5.

## CHAPTER 5.

White prostitute asked if she could be admitted to the Rescue Home. However, despite a few prostitutes joining the street meeting, most remained hidden in the surrounding houses, surreptitiously peeping out at the proceedings.<sup>23</sup> Becoming "rescued" was not an attractive economic alternative as being a housemaid, laundress or needlewoman was more poorly paid and afforded less leisure than prostitution.<sup>24</sup> Thus "rescue" work met with more failures than successes.

But success can be measured in different ways. It was very courageous for Cape bourgeois women to delve into the sordid underground world, far removed from the experience of well-bred middle-class or respectable ladies. Assurance Lane, where most of the brothels were, was an example of the type of environment visited by purity workers. It was a narrow street, the stench was vile and the CC.WCTU were appalled at the overcrowding.<sup>25</sup>

Besides prostitutes there were often pimps, drunken and/or belligerent male clients and madams, who did not like prostitutes lured away to the Rescue Home. For this reason women purity workers were in real danger of being assaulted. Sarah Gow, Acting Matron of the Christian Mission Home, was struck across the face several times by a madam when she tried to take a girl under 21 years of age, at her father's request, to the Rescue Home.<sup>26</sup>

The American missionaries encouraged the CC.WCTU to use all its resources to fight for the repeal of the CDA. The feminist

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23. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, December 28 1891.

24. Van Heyningen, "The Social Evil in the Cape Colony 1868-1902", p.171.

25. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, December 28 1891.

26. The Cape Argus, March 12 1892, p.8, col.5.

## CHAPTER 5.

stance of the CC.WCTU is apparent in the statement that action was needed because "our hearts burn within us at the indignity done to women through the Contagious Diseases Act".<sup>27</sup>

Emily Conybeare, a colleague of Josephine Butler, visited Cape Town in 1892 and influenced the social purity policies of the CC.WCTU.<sup>28</sup> An ardent believer in the values of purity and moral equality of the sexes, she had even broken off her engagement ten days before she was to marry, because her fiance confessed to having led an "immoral life". This experience, she felt, qualified her to speak out for the Purity Campaign because she had been betrayed by male immorality.<sup>29</sup>

The CC.WCTU was aware that Saul Solomon had started the Association for the Repeal of the CDA in 1871,<sup>30</sup> referred to previously, but until the informative lectures of Bushnell, Andrew and Conybeare, there was little comprehension of the real sexist nature of this Act. After Conybeare's lecture at the YWCA in Cape Town on 9 February 1892, Lady Sprigg voiced the sentiments of many women present when she declared: "I have never known before what the C. D. Acts meant".<sup>31</sup> Five hundred copies of Conybeare's speech entitled "Womanly Women" were distributed to CC.WCTU branches throughout the Colony.<sup>32</sup>

To reinforce Conybeare's message, the Salvation Army also

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27. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 2nd Annual Convention, 1891, p.3.
  28. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, January 19, 1892.
  29. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, March 15 1892.
  30. Van Heyningen, "The Social Evil in the Cape Colony 1869-1902", pp.174-175.
  31. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, February 9 1892.
  32. CA, A.1696, vol.1/1, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, May 28 1892, p.3.

## CHAPTER 5.

read papers on the treatment of prostitutes at the Lock Hospital. Some of their evidence was far too distressing even to be repeated in the presence of the "respectable" women in the audience. Being involved in the Purity Campaign therefore needed more moral and social courage than temperance work.<sup>33</sup>

One of the most important results of the tours of the American missionaries and Conybeare was the CC.WCTU's decision that without the franchise, women were powerless to effect any changes in men's attitude towards the right of a woman to control her own body. A resolution was therefore passed to begin more constructive purity work and a campaign for suffrage.<sup>34</sup>

Initially purity work fell under the Department of Evangelistic Work. In 1892, after the American WCTU missionaries had visited, the CC.WCTU decided that the Crusade warranted its own special department <sup>35</sup> and appointed Emma Murray as Superintendent in 1893. All CC.WCTU branches were encouraged to introduce the Purity Campaign to Mothers' Meetings.<sup>36</sup>

A British organization, The White Cross Society, started by the Church of England, was one of the originators of the idea that sex education should be preached in the Church. White Cross educational literature was disseminated by the CC.WCTU including its innovative idea that both sexes followed an equal moral code. Inspired by this philosophy, Frances Willard toured the United States lecturing WCTU Unions on this subject and afterwards incorporated it into the work of the WCTU Social

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33. CA, V11, vol.2/3/1, Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, February 9 1892.

34. Ibid., Letter A. Ferguson to M. Allen, February 9 1892.

35. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 3rd Annual Convention, 1892, p.81.

36. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.43.



## CHAPTER 5.

Purity Department.<sup>37</sup> Regular reports were received from other parts of the world which assisted the CC.WCTU's Purity Campaign and persuaded both more members and non-members to work for Purity.

From its experience of the Temperance Campaign the CC.WCTU knew that demands would be better heard if petitions were submitted to the Cape Parliament, and a committee was formed to do so. The first two petitions in 1893 asked the government to raise the Age of Consent from 12 to 18.<sup>38</sup> The objectives of the Purity Department were defined at that time as: "We demand: I. That there shall be no class legislation, making laws applicable to women and not to men. II. That the Compulsory Lock Hospital system be abolished. III. That the Age of Consent be raised, if not to 18 to 16 at least. IV. That Houses of Ill-fame be counted illegal."<sup>39</sup> The first three of these are decidedly feminist in outlook.<sup>40</sup>

The CC.WCTU found that its first two petitions stimulated a great deal of interest. Emma Murray concluded that women were only "holding back from ignorance or a false sense of sentiment of delicacy, yet when the subject had been put perfectly before them we can count upon the interest and the sympathy of a large proportion of women in this land".<sup>41</sup> It became clear that the issues addressed by the CC.WCTU that the same standards of morality should apply to men and that women be able to discuss sexual matters without false modesty, were relevant and

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37. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.111.

38. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.43.

39. Ibid., p.44.

40. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.111.

41. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.44.

## CHAPTER 5.

needed attention.

### 5.2. The CDA - Their Application and Enforcement in the 1890s.

In the Cape Colony the CDA was in force in eight towns: Cape Town, Simonstown, East London, Port Elizabeth, Knysna, Wynberg, King Williams Town, and Uitenhage. The Acts aimed to prevent the "wholesale spreading of infection" by venereal diseases, and to this end, prostitutes were forced to undergo periodic medical inspections by Government Medical Inspectors and could be prosecuted if they did not comply.<sup>42</sup> Men were not liable for this and when an unannounced medical inspection was held in the barracks at Simonstown, many men were found to be infected with venereal disease. There was no legislation to force men to be examined or to penalize male offenders.<sup>43</sup>

When the CC.WCTU attacked the CDA because it was discriminatory, they were told by the government that only women were prostitutes and that sexually active men were not considered to be spreaders of disease even if they had it.<sup>44</sup> The CC.WCTU maintained that innocent women and children were endangered by these Acts because they legalized prostitution, encouraged adultery and led to the infection of wives and children. Government officials rejected this view, claiming only to be protecting "innocent women and children" by medical checks on prostitutes.<sup>45</sup>

Contemporary records show that the largest number of cases of venereal disease were men. In Cape Town, infected men were compelled to identify the women from whom they had allegedly received the infection, but women were not allowed to disclose

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42. G.24-'95, Reports on Public Health, 1894, p.xxxviii.

43. G.24-'95, Report of the District Surgeon, 1894, p.1.

44. Ibid., p.xxiii.

45. G.24-'95, Report of the Public Health Officer, 1894, p.58.

## CHAPTER 5.

the names of their male clients. Women were forcibly held for examination and treatment in the Lock Hospital.<sup>46</sup>

The Medical Inspector admitted that the CDA was discriminatory. He even agreed with the CC.WCTU that men were careless of venereal disease and seldom bothered to follow up the recommended treatment whereas "it was rare to see a woman suffering from secondary symptoms", which he ascribed to their forced periodic examinations.<sup>47</sup> The records show a marked reduction of venereal disease in women in 1893 which the District Surgeon ascribed to women showing a greater sense of responsibility and even volunteering for medical examinations.<sup>48</sup> The CDA therefore seemed unnecessary, even in their own terms.

By 1893, petitions from the CC.WCTU began to have an effect. The District Surgeon still defended the implementation of the Act, but admitted that syphilis should be a notifiable disease whatever the gender of the infected person<sup>49</sup> but he also maintained that Purity campaigners were misguided in thinking that prostitutes would welcome the repeal of the CDA and said "From 1889 to 1892 women have shown increased appreciation of the benefits of the annual examinations".<sup>50</sup> His view seems to have been incorrect, because the prostitutes in the Lock Hospital staged a riot against the CDA, accusing doctors of injuring them unnecessarily and of using damaged instruments, a charge which turned out to be well founded.<sup>51</sup> The CC.WCTU called the District

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46. G.24-'95, Report of the Public Health Officer, p.58.

47. G.14-'93, p.xxviii.

48. Ibid., p.xxvi.

49. G.24-'95, Reports on Public Health, p.xlii.

50. G.14-'93, p.xxviii.

51. Elizabeth Boudina van Heyningen, "Public Health - Society in Cape Town 1850 - 1910", (Unpubl., Ph.D., University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1986), pp.408-409.

## CHAPTER 5.

Surgeon a policeman not a doctor, and also noted his large annual salary for his CDA work.<sup>52</sup>

### 5.3. Promotion of the Purity Campaign in the Cape Colony - 1892-1898.

The CC.WCTU was well informed on the CDA and disseminated literature to all unions. To promote its cause further the CC.WCTU requested the WWCTU to appoint Alice Palmer as National Organizer and in 1892 she was sent to the Cape Colony.<sup>53</sup> As she had considerable experience in the United States, Palmer was invaluable as a promoter of the Purity Campaign, inspiring members with her accounts of her work in America.<sup>54</sup> During her tour through the Cape Colony in 1894 she even initiated new branches of the CC.WCTU in Colesberg, Murraysburg, Tarkastad, Whittlesea, King Williams Town, East London, Burghersdorp and Aliwal North, instructing them on how to teach purity and temperance to all "farmers, traders and the native population".<sup>55</sup>

Purity work among the Xhosa was fairly well established by 1894 and had gone hand in hand with Christianity and westernization. Christian missionaries in the Eastern Cape had long attempted to stop polygamy, abaqueta (beer dances which were said to lead to sexually uninhibited behaviour), ukwaluka (circumcision), ukumetsha (pre-marital love play), and intonjani (female puberty rites). Many Xhosa accepted the Purity Campaign as traditionally ukawaluka, intonjani and ukumetsha were all forms of sexual restrictions taught to young people. Marriage (even

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52. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.54.

53. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, p.19.

54. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, pp.84-85.

55. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, pp.34-35.

## CHAPTER 5.

polygamy) was a sacred Xhosa institution and the protection of women and children underlay the whole system of sexual rituals.<sup>56</sup> It was thus easy both for traditional and westernized Xhosa women to affiliate to the CC.WCTU.

The feminist ideals of the Purity Campaign were more difficult to achieve than the sexual ones because even within Christian church groups, Xhosa men demanded women's subservience. Yet the CC.WCTU reported in 1896 that "large numbers" of Xhosa women had joined the Purity Campaign even starting their own White Cross Society<sup>57</sup> and by 1897 "five Women's Associations with 258 members and four Girls' Associations with a membership of 200 had affiliated to the CC.WCTU" in the Blytheswood district. New African members also enrolled in Queenstown and Lessyton, but no figures are recorded.<sup>58</sup> Their work was praised by the CC.WCTU as staunch and enthusiastic and a booklet on the Purity Campaign was printed in Xhosa.<sup>59</sup>

For African women, the path to feminist liberation was more difficult than for middle-class Whites as they lived in "double enslavement faced by gender, class, race and sexuality".<sup>60</sup> Indeed many may have been drawn to the Purity Campaign because they saw it as an escape from the patriarchal traditions of their own society.<sup>61</sup>

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56. Mills, "The Rise of African Nationalism in the Cape Colony", p.186.

57. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 7th Annual Convention, 1896, pp.51-52.

58. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 9th Annual Convention, 1898, pp.63-64.

59. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, pp.40-43.

60. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, pp.42-43.

61. Walker, Women and Gender in South Africa to 1945, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1990), p.252.

## CHAPTER 5.

### 5.4. The Campaign against the CDA, 1894-1896.

In 1894 the CC.WCTU was pleased to note that owing to its increased efforts a great deal of interest was shown in fighting to repeal the CDA. Although the Union was an organization for women run by women, a man who was prepared to teach his son the equal gender standard of morality was permitted to become an honorary member of the CC.WCTU. Male sympathizers were asked to present petitions to the Cape Parliament.<sup>62</sup> On learning that a men's society in Holland visited brothels to rescue "fallen men", the CC.WCTU challenged its male honorary members to do the same.<sup>63</sup>

One CC.WCTU honorary member was James Rose-Innes (discussed earlier for his support of the Union's temperance activities), and he submitted a Bill to raise the Age of Consent<sup>64</sup> His original Bill intended to raise it from 12 to 16 but a powerful anti-feminist faction in the Cape Parliament, headed by Cecil Rhodes, contested it and there was a compromise on the age of 14 years. Rhodes, who believed women should have no rights at all, exemplified the kind of male against whom the CC.WCTU waged outright war. He initially insisted that the age of 12 years remain as "the class of girls" employed in "up-country homes" would be empowered to take advantage and to press charges of rape on employers if was it raised.<sup>65</sup>

The CDA was repealed in Britain in 1886, but by 1894 the CC.WCTU had still had no favourable response to its many petitions. As had happened with the Temperance Campaign, the

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62. CA, A.1896, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.17.

63. Ibid., p.18.

64. Ibid., p.37.

65. Tindall, James Rose-Innes, p.101.

## CHAPTER 5.

slow progress of the Purity Campaign taught the CC.WCTU to become resilient, not to concede defeat, and to exert even more pressure on Parliament.<sup>66</sup>

The many petitions of the CC.WCTU demonstrated that women were beginning to band together to demand their rights. The CC.WCTU felt it had succeeded in this to some extent when a Select Committee was appointed to investigate the CDA and it forwarded a copy of its report to the CC.WCTU.<sup>67</sup> In 1896 the CC.WCTU was delighted that a Bill to amend the first part of the CDA had passed its second reading and claimed that the Union's campaign had contributed to this amendment.<sup>68</sup>

Informing the public obliged CC.WCTU members to speak openly on sexual matters, and The Cape Times regularly published articles on repealing the CDA written by the CC.WCTU.<sup>69</sup> The name of the CC.WCTU thus became well known as a women's organization bold enough publicly to address matters of social taboo and also to strive for equality for women. Not all CC.WCTU Unions were equally hard-working or enthusiastic: of the twenty-three Unions only fourteen were actively involved in the Purity Campaign. The most enthusiastic were those at Stellenbosch run by Emma Murray and the Blythewood Union in the Transkei.<sup>70</sup>

The CC.WCTU did not have an easy task. Although the organisation grew it did so erratically, six unions being formed in 1895, (Colesberg, Murraysburg, Tarkastad, Whittlesea, King Williams

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66. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.21.

67. Ibid., p.52.

68. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, p.24.

69. Ibid., p.13.

70. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, pp.30-33.

## CHAPTER 5.

Town, East London, Burghersdorp and Aliwal North), but two closed down.<sup>71</sup> It relied on outside assistance particularly from the Salvation Army. The CC.WCTU publicized its links with the British and Continental Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice and the British Oriental Home Federation, to show the international importance of the Purity Campaign.<sup>72</sup>

To maintain international links, Emma Murray attended the WWCTU Convention in London in 1895 where she met purity workers from many other countries who promised to aid the CC.WCTU in the repeal of the CDA. The British and Continental Association for the Abolition of Vice provided the CC.WCTU with publicity pamphlets and these were despatched to church ministers of every denomination who were asked to preach on the subject.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to practical work, the CC.WCTU tried to free its members from the constraints of male-ordered social behaviour. Less enthusiastic Unions which were alleged to "suffer from excessive modesty", were reprimanded and told that "none have the right to adopt that 'modest violet' attitude which is becoming, or at least permissible in private life".<sup>74</sup> The motto of the CC.WCTU was always to "agitate, organise and educate", even on "difficult and delicate" subjects.<sup>75</sup> The CC.WCTU tried to raise women's consciousness by persuading them that their individual problems of male repression were shared by all women and that they had to overcome them by joining forces, voicing their difficulties jointly and then fighting for political equality

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71. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention, 1895, p.17.

72. Ibid., p.21.

73. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 7th Annual Convention, 1896, pp.50-51.

74. Ibid., pp.29-30.

75. Ibid., p.52.



## CHAPTER 5.

at all levels.<sup>76</sup>

To have any effect it was imperative that women obtain the franchise. However, the Purity Campaign was so controversial that even some sympathetic members of parliament were reluctant to put the CC.WCTU's demands forward for fear of losing votes. The CC.WCTU believed that the sole remedy was that women obtain the vote and put women's issues to the fore.

The CC.WCTU was disappointed that all women did not rally to the cause. Lack of interest was ascribed to women being poorly educated about their "just rights". Ignorance was common and even women ratepayers were unaware of their right to vote in municipal elections. The CC.WCTU aimed to rectify this by training women to vote for councillors sympathetic to local women's causes, including the Purity Campaign, in the hope that any positive results achieved would spur women on to press for the franchise.<sup>77</sup>

Powerful men remained unsympathetic. To the CC.WCTU it was unfathomable that Prime Minister Sprigg and most of his cabinet refused to raise the Age of Consent and repeal the CDA. The CC.WCTU called them "unnatural fathers" and "hypocrites", who would be the first to be upset if their 14 year old daughters were sexually molested. If the leader of the Colony was not prepared to protect his own daughters, the CC.WCTU considered the entire Cape Government to be corrupt and women to be in real danger. Despite its English, imperialist loyalties, the CC.WCTU commended Paul Kruger's conservative government in the Transvaal for being "god-fearing and just". There was no CDA in

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76. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.75.

77. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 7th Annual Convention 1896, pp.54-55.

## CHAPTER 5.

the Transvaal and Paul Kruger wished to stop the practice of prostitution throughout the Transvaal.<sup>78</sup>

The hostile attitude of Cape politicians resulted in twenty-nine petitions from the CC.WCTU to the Cape Parliament, and the circulation of purity literature on a large scale among the public. Copies of the pamphlet written by the initiator of the Campaign against the CDA, Saul Solomon, were also circulated among parliamentarians to remind them how long this campaign had been waged and that it was initiated by a man who was greatly respected for his integrity among his peers.<sup>79</sup>

In line with its taking up issues which were just beginning to surface in the Victorian era, the Purity Campaign included the prevention of cruelty to animals. CC.WCTU members were asked not to follow fashion by wearing feathers to decorate their hats because this inflicted "pain or destruction on birds of plumage" merely for personal adornment.<sup>80</sup> Thus members had to be prepared not only to protest against male society customs, but even to confront other women on certain issues.

Women's liberation included clothing design and as early as 1893, Union members were encouraged to free themselves from social conventions by discarding corsets which injured the body and trailing skirts which gathered germs.<sup>81</sup> Members were encouraged to take up cycling which was not considered by many to be a pastime for a "lady", because it was feared "that the bicycle would lead women into prostitution and the bicycle seat

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78. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 8th Annual Convention, 1897, pp.14-15.

79. Ibid., p.49.

80. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 9th Annual Convention, 1898, p.11.

81. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 4th Annual Convention, 1893, pp.57-58.

## CHAPTER 5.

would be women's moral downfall". Frances Willard head of the WCTU also a member of the feminist Health Care Movement, believed that women would only reach their full potential with a healthy body.<sup>82</sup>

By 1898 the Purity Campaign despite a lack of practical legal progress, enjoyed considerable support and the largest number of petitions in the history of the CC.WCTU were presented to Parliament in that year, and it gained - for the first time - the support of all Christian denominations.<sup>83</sup>

The CC.WCTU took up what is now a crucial feminist concern, by objecting to women being used in nude or semi-nude photographs for advertising and in pornographic literature.<sup>84</sup> These pictures denigrated women, putting them forward as "a subject class".<sup>85</sup> With no official vote or power to change sexual laws and customs, women were urged to use whatever power they had, and to give boys and girls identical sex education in order that boys grew up to respect women.<sup>86</sup>

Like modern feminists, the CC.WCTU believed in the right of women to protect themselves and their children from vice and violence,<sup>87</sup> and advocated censorship on all films shown in "bioscopes". Films portraying nudity and/or violence would stimulate men to perpetrate crimes on women and female children

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82. Pivar, Purity Crusade, p.176.

83. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, p.37.

84. Humm, Dictionary of Feminist Theory, pp.169-170.

85. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 10th Annual Convention, 1899, pp.17-18.

86. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, p.35.

87. Jacklyn Cock, Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa, (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1991), p.127.

## CHAPTER 5.

as they degraded the female body as a sex object.<sup>88</sup> Because of the CC.WCTU's consistent campaign against pornography the first two women appointed to the Bioscope Censorship Board in 1919, were CP.WCTU members, Emilie Solomon and Mrs Reitz.<sup>89</sup>

### 5.5. The South African War and Union - 1899 to 1914.

During the South African War prostitution in the Cape Colony increased as British and Continental prostitutes flocked into Cape Town with the troops. This concerned Capetonians greatly and many prominent citizens urged the Government to introduce legislation to stop this expansion of prostitution. One town councillor suggested that brothels be confined to a prescribed area of the city, where they could operate legally, a stand with which the CC.WCTU of course disagreed, wanting prostitution to be declared illegal.<sup>90</sup>

The CC.WCTU found an ally when one of its supporters, William Schreiner, became premier. He introduced legislation that anyone living off the proceeds of prostitution faced severe prosecution. Others proposed that the advice of pimps and brothel owners should be sought to stem prostitution, which the CC.WCTU maintained was an insult to women's integrity whom they felt knew just as much about the prostitution law as did any man - indeed, in the case of the CC.WCTU, probably a good deal more. Such actions proved to the CC.WCTU that women were held in contempt in that the advice of criminals was sought above that of

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88. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, March 20 1911, p.1.

89. CA, A.702, J. Solly, "Presidential Address to the NCW", reprinted from the South African Woman's Weekly, November 22 1923.

90. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, 1902, p.35.

## CHAPTER 5.

law-abiding citizens, simply because they were women.<sup>91</sup>

The end of the War did not see the cessation of prostitution, indeed a report from the Port Elizabeth WCTU showed that child prostitution was increasing.<sup>92</sup> In addition, pimps and brothel owners were not being prosecuted under the Act passed in 1902 for the Suppression of Betting Houses, Gaming Houses and Brothels, and the CC.WCTU openly accused the police of accepting bribes from pimps and brothel owners.<sup>93</sup>

A new, dynamic, head of the Purity Department was appointed. This was Mary Brown who included among her mentors and personal friends, the initiators of the British Purity Campaign, Josephine Butler and Ellice Hopkins.<sup>94</sup> Her friend Emily Hobhouse travelled widely in South Africa and did much to promote the aims of the Purity Campaign and suffrage.<sup>95</sup> Another friend was Olive Schreiner, who proved to be an asset to the CC.WCTU's Purity Campaign.<sup>96</sup> During a visit to England in 1885, Schreiner campaigned against the CDA.<sup>97</sup> She believed in equality in marriage, sexual norms and the prevention of male promiscuity.<sup>98</sup> Although she was sympathetic to the Boer cause in the South African War, Schreiner campaigned for peace at the women's anti-war congresses in Graaff-Reinet and Somerset East in 1900.<sup>99</sup>

When the CC.WCTU introduced the Purity and Peace Campaigns into

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91. Minutes of the 11th Annual Convention, p.36.

92. CA, A.1696, vol.2/3, Minutes of the 14th Annual Convention 1905, p.33.

93. Ibid., p.44.

94. The White Ribbon, September, 1928, p.7.

95. Angela James and Nina Hills, eds., Mrs John Brown, (London, John Murray, 1937), p.124.

96. Ibid., p.115.

97. First & Scott, Olive Schreiner, p.148.

98. Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, p.178 99.

99. First & Scott, Olive Schreiner, p.246.

## CHAPTER 5.

the WEL, Schreiner pledged support.<sup>100</sup>

Schreiner's high political profile enabled her to do "a great deal of personal work amongst members of Parliament" to spread the cause of these campaigns and lobby for suffrage. As a popular author she drew women to her lectures on women's rights and was able to hold more "large drawing room meetings" than other leaders of the CC.WCTU and WEL.<sup>101</sup> Her verdict on the progress of the WEL in 1909, was that "we are doing splendidly in Cape Town".<sup>102</sup>

Mary Brown was a factor in this progress. Her work in England with the BTWA had been among factory girls and she drew working-class women in Cape Town into the Purity and Suffrage Campaigns.<sup>103</sup> She believed, as did all members of the CC.WCTU, that poor and working class women were the victims of government legalized prostitution under the CDA and also vulnerable to blackmail and bribery from the police.<sup>104</sup> Brown's efforts earned her a place on the Select Committee of the Cape Parliament on the repeal of the CDA, which was appointed in 1907.<sup>105</sup>

Mary Brown began sex education courses for mentally retarded girls and their parents. A home was established by the CC.WCTU for unmarried pregnant mentally retarded girls. Brown also involved the CC.WCTU in finding adequate accommodation, better working conditions and the moral upliftment of "native

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100. SAL, SABP.15, Pamphlets of the South African Peace and Arbitration Society, J. Solly, The Growth of an Idea, p.4.

101. SAL, SABP.15, Solly, The Growth of an Idea, p.2.

102. SAL, MSC.28, The Olive Schreiner Manuscript Collection, File, 2.2.0, Letter O. Schreiner to Lady Rose-Innes, July 6 1909.

103. CA, A.1696, vol.2/3, Minutes of the 15th Annual Convention, 1906, p.22.

104. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.293.

105. CA, A.1696, vol.2/3, Minutes of the 16th Annual Convention, 1907, p.38.

## CHAPTER 5.

female servants" who came from rural areas to seek work in urban areas.<sup>106</sup>

Through Brown's persistence, three CP.WCTU members were appointed to the Parliamentary Commission on the CDA in 1912, having travelled throughout South Africa for ten months gathering their evidence for the Commission.<sup>107</sup> Although the CDA was not repealed, the Commission itself was a great triumph for the CP.WCTU because this was the first occasion that three women were appointed to an official commission.<sup>108</sup>

In 1912, a branch of the International Society of State Regulation of Vice was formed in South Africa and three CP.WCTU members were appointed to its council. This Society had attracted many feminists in Great Britain because it had a "more militant way ... a demand for sexual autonomy".<sup>109</sup> As these were issues addressed by the CP.WCTU since its inception in 1889, membership of this Society was a reinforcement of the CP.WCTU's Purity Campaign and a means of spreading its message to more women.

The CP.WCTU did not abandon its fight to raise the Age of Consent to 16, and Emilie Solomon appealed to the 1914 Cape Town congress of the National Council of Women of South Africa, (NCW),<sup>110</sup> to adopt this cause. Solomon's appeal resulted in a deputation of fourteen women's associations all affiliated to the NCW (which consisted of English speaking South African women's

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106. CA, A.1696, vol.2/3, Minutes of the 21st Annual Convention, 1911, p.11.

107. The White Ribbon, November, 1912, p.10.

108. James & Hills, Mrs John Brown, pp.133-135.

109. Barbara Caine, Victorian Feminists, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.257-258.

110. Deborah Steinstra. Women's Movements: International Organizations, (Hampshire, London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1994), p.48.

## CHAPTER 5.

societies including the CP.WCTU), and the leading Afrikaans women's organization, the ACVV, approaching the Minister of Justice to raise the Age of Consent. However, despite this show of female solidarity the Minister offered only empty promises as the Cabinet was "overburdened".<sup>111</sup> To the delegates it was just another indication of the unimportance of the affairs of women and how little power women had to alter laws.

### 5.6 The Campaign for a wider field of employment, 1894 to 1925.

Rebuffs such as these strengthened the CP.WCTU's resolve to fight for suffrage. There was concern, however, in some quarters that women were focusing on suffrage as the peak of feminine attainment. The CP.WCTU warned that although the vote was a vital part of equality, there were other issues as urgent. One of these was "freedom for women to develop along their own lines and to use the qualities of mind and body they possess as they deem best".<sup>112</sup>

One of the ways to achieve this was to expand employment opportunities for women and this arose from the Purity Campaign. The CC.WCTU wanted prostitutes and other women taken into custody to be placed under the guard of females and as early as 1894, began a campaign for the introduction of police matrons.<sup>113</sup> Their concern was that many female prisoners were sexually abused by their male guards. However, if the women complained, the word of the warder was taken in preference to that of the prisoner.<sup>114</sup>

In 1898 the CC.WCTU resolved to work for better paid

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111. The White Ribbon, August, 1914, p.2.

112. Ibid., March, 1915, p.4.

113. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention, 1894, p.24.

114. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.258.



## CHAPTER 5.

employment for working class-women, maintaining that they only resorted to prostitution because they could find no other employment and even if they could, remuneration was so low that they preferred prostitution as a better paid trade. The CC.WCTU believed that women had a right to "retain their personal independence" and that, especially in the case of the lower-class women, this was threatened by financial insecurity. The CC.WCTU therefore campaigned for better employment opportunities, wages and working conditions for women.<sup>115</sup>

In order to provide employment the CC.WCTU linked up with the National Vigilance Committee in Britain to find suitable accommodation and employment for young women emigrating from Britain to the Cape Colony. The CC.WCTU tried to find suitable employment for these women which would assure their "personal independence".<sup>116</sup>

In 1898 the CC.WCTU scored a victory when the campaign to have female matrons appointed in the Cape Colony was successfully concluded. The appointment of police women became the next objective. This would put an end to policemen dragging "struggling, screaming women" through the streets in the process of arrest.<sup>117</sup>

During World War I because many of the male police enlisted, the CP.WCTU increased the pressure on municipalities to employ police women<sup>118</sup> In December 1915 there was some success as three police women were appointed in Cape Town, but the Cape Town

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115. CA, A.1696, vol.2/2, Minutes of the 9th Annual Convention, 1898, p.11.

116. Ibid., p.12.

117. Ibid., p.62.

118. The White Ribbon, April, 1915, p.5.

## CHAPTER 5.

WCTU did not consider these sufficient.<sup>119</sup> However, an application for female voluntary police patrols was also granted and by June 1915 there were thirty-five volunteer patrols reporting weekly to a Police Board.<sup>120</sup>

The Police Patrol Board decided to pay volunteer women patrols for their services.<sup>121</sup> In an ironic twist, Frederic Creswell, MP for Troyeville, objected to women patrols as they were so "narrow minded", innocent people were arrested for soliciting, a charge which in the past years the CP.WCTU had brought against male police authorities.<sup>122</sup> In 1923, Bishop Lavis, Archbishop of Cape Town, supported by the CP.WCTU, held a public meeting to urge the authorities to appoint more women patrols of "all colours and creeds" to emulate those started by the CP.WCTU in 1915.<sup>123</sup>

During the war the CP.WCTU collected funds for a hostel at Kirstenbosch to house women who were to be trained as professional gardeners. Dr Bertha Stoneman of the CP.WCTU began these gardening classes at the Huguenot Seminary.<sup>124</sup> It seemed that attitudes towards women had begun to change because of their wartime contribution and the fact that the war increased opportunities for women's employment.<sup>125</sup> The CP.WCTU took every advantage of increasing the opportunities for voluntary and

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119. CA, A.1696, vol.1/1, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, October 4 1916, pp.3-4.

120. CA, A.702, Julia Solly, "A Plea for Women Police", The South African Nation, December 12 1925.

121. CA, A.702, "Presidential Address by J. Solly to the NCW", November 22 1923.

122. CA, SRP 1/3/14 vol. 4, p.283

123. CA, A.702, Solly, A Plea for Women Police.

124. CA, A.702, "Presidential Address by J. Solly to the NCW", November 22 1923.

125. Wenborn, The Pictorial History of the U.S.A., p.208.

## CHAPTER 5.

professional work for women during the First World War.

The CP.WCTU policy to achieve personal independence for women, prompted it to help Mary Rolt, the wife of the Dean of Cape Town, to establish a home for educated, unmarried mothers. While there were homes for lower class working mothers, there was no institution for typists, nurses or teachers. A day nursery was attached to this Home as the CP.WCTU wanted these girls to return to work and support themselves and their children. For the first time, Jewish girls would be admitted to a Christian hostel, on the insistence of Mary Brown. Although this can be seen as a credit to feminist sisterhood crossing these barriers of religion, it could also be attributed to Brown's Jewish ancestry, discussed in Chapter II. However, she met with no opposition from within the CP.WCTU.<sup>126</sup>

### 5.7. The Repeal of the CDA and Campaign for suffrage, 1916 to 1930.

After the war, the CDA issue was raised again and in 1918 Julia Solly went to Bloemfontein as part of a panel consisting of six women. There she put forward the CP.WCTU's and the NCW's case that there should be "no sex bias" in the examination and treatment of sexual or other diseases.<sup>127</sup> When the amended Health Act, No.36 of 1919, was promulgated the new wording read: "Every person" who suspected that "he" had venereal disease was liable to report for medical treatment or face prosecution. Males would now be liable to prosecution if they did not follow up initial treatment and would be confined in a "special hospital" until cured. The old Lock Hospital system for females

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126. James & Hills, Mrs John Brown, p.159.

127. CA, A.702 Statement by Julia Solly on the Health Bill, on behalf of the NCW and the CP.WCTU, Bloemfontein, 1918.

## CHAPTER 5.

only was repealed and "any female over the age of 12 years can seek to be examined, by a woman medical practitioner".<sup>128</sup>

Act 36 of 1919 was a milestone in the work of the CP.WCTU. Although it is unreasonable to claim that this organization was solely responsible, it had certainly played a major role. However, and somewhat ironically, the CP.WCTU was not entirely happy with Act 36 of 1919, maintaining that compulsory inspection for all meant that women would still be victimized because men controlled the health services and police force. Inspection of women was still an outrage in itself and the clause on the right to a woman doctor was a farce because there were so few.<sup>129</sup>

With the repeal of the CDA, the CP.WCTU formulated new Purity Campaign goals and intensified its focus on welfare and female employment opportunities. In her address as candidate for the municipal elections of 1918, Julia Solly promised: "certified midwives, female sanitary and health inspectors, food inspection, adequate removal and destruction of refuse, children's playgrounds, public music, extension of women patrols, housing reforms, combating infant mortality" and "no liquor".<sup>130</sup>

The CP.WCTU has been criticized for not being truly feminist in that it was concerned only with the implications of the CDA on white prostitutes.<sup>131</sup> But the CP.WCTU was not always racially biased. When the Child Welfare Association Conference, held in Port Elizabeth in 1922, voted that compulsory inspection of all Coloured servants be introduced, the CP.WCTU protested. It recommended instead, free voluntary

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128. CA, SRP.5/1/9, pp.234-244.

129. CA, A.702, Statement by J. Solly on the Health Bill, 1918.

130. CA, A.702, Municipal candidate address by J. Solly to Ward 9, 1918.

131. Van Heyningen, "Public Health", p.390.

## CHAPTER 5.

hospitalization of these women and that they should "not be marked as delinquents of society " but recognized as victims of poverty and ignorance. The CP.WCTU also strongly protested against the suggestion that Black women carry passes, stating that better housing and education rather than passes were needed. In 1925 the CP.WCTU protested against "one or two municipalities who want a medical examination of Coloured women and Native women for venereal disease", as this was a "retrograde step back to the CDA".<sup>132</sup>

In 1928 the CP.WCTU again campaigned to raise the Age of Consent because of the increase in the number of illegitimate births. It pressed for laws for compulsory support by the father and for registration of only the mother's name on the child's Birth Certificate to protect the custodial right of the mother. This was a key issue in the CP.WCTU's suffrage campaign.<sup>133</sup> Despite this organization's strong Christian moralistic opposition to premarital sex, its feminist beliefs seem to have dominated this issue.

The CP.WCTU regarded prostitution as the product of "man as a capitalist", who ensured that women were underpaid, dependent, used as "the private property of man" and had "little or no access to production and sources". Although the CP.WCTU was not Marxist, it believed that prostitution had an "economic root".<sup>134</sup>

Socialism was not a new concept to the CP.WCTU. Frances Willard, an early leader, had emphasized "the relationship between temperance women on the one hand and labour and socialism

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132. The White Ribbon, January, 1925, p.5.

133. Ibid., September, 1928, p.12.

134. Ibid., January, 1929, p.7.

## CHAPTER 5.

on the other".<sup>135</sup> Socialism was one of the tenets of the WWCTU and the BTWA as both the Temperance and Purity Campaigns hinged on social reform.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, although official CP.WCTU policy supported no political party, it in fact championed the Labour Party. Despite its predominantly middle-class membership it encouraged women to believe in socialism, because the CP.WCTU maintained that "in every other country where women are enfranchised it is the Labour Party (under various names) that has supported them throughout".<sup>137</sup> When the Labour Party came to power in Britain in 1924, the CP.WCTU expected the Labour Party in South Africa to follow suit, hoping that CP.WCTU policies of social upliftment would be endorsed and that the Labour Party would grant women suffrage.

When suffrage was granted to White South African women in 1930, (as discussed in Chapter 4), the CP.WCTU drew up a list of proposed voting issues in which feminist issues predominated. The Age of Consent at 16 was considered "only nominal" and women should demand the removal of loopholes used by men in the past to avoid prosecution for sexual abuse of minors. There were still not enough women in the police force and women should demand equal pay for equal work in every sector of commerce and industry. The rights of the unmarried mother and the divorcee must be protected and equal guardianship of children made law.<sup>138</sup> The Purity Campaign of the CP.WCTU therefore fought for, and achieved, more feminist goals than did its Temperance Campaign.

While the time for feminism had arrived, the time of

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135. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.242.

136. Ibid., pp.247-251.

137. The White Ribbon, 1929, p.7.

138. Ibid., December, 1930, pp.3-4.

## CHAPTER 5.

evangelism had passed and the CP.WCTU failed to impose its standards of Christian morality either on prostitutes or the Cape public. While prostitutes rebelled against the CDA, and never seem to have been protested against the CC.WCTU's efforts to "save" them, as Tyrrell points out, the fact that prostitution continued to flourish meant that these women did not see themselves as "sexual victims" and wanted to practice prostitution. The CC/CP.WCTU fought for women's rights but, like other temperance and purity workers, was oblivious to the rights of prostitutes to choose their lifestyle and the right of any woman to sexual freedom.<sup>140</sup>

The WCTU started the campaign for men and women to conform to an equal sexual standard, that of Christian purity, but by 1930, women everywhere began to demand the same sexual freedom enjoyed by men, whether in heterosexual or homosexual relationships. <sup>41</sup> The CP.WCTU also prescribed fidelity, marriage and children, and Christian morality.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, while the Purity Campaign in many respects shows clear indications of a growing recognition of women's rights, the CP.WCTU still saw these within a strong Christian ethical framework. The link to the Victorian age had not yet been broken and the CP.WCTU did not keep pace with modern feminism.

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139. Van Heyningen, "Public Health", p.408.

140. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, pp.219-220.

141. Tyrrell, Ibid., pp.286-287.

142. The White Ribbon, April, 1928, p.12; January, 1929, p.6.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explained how the CC/CP.WCTU contributed towards Christian evangelism, the ideals of temperance and sexual morality, as well as the female franchise in the Cape Colony from 1889 to 1930. However, the greatest achievement of the CC/CP.WCTU was in its promotion of feminism in the Cape Colony. This said, it must also be recognized that none of its achievements was an unqualified success.

With regard to (Christian) evangelism, as discussed in Chapter 1, the CC.WCTU principally attracted members who were already committed Christians. The CC/CP.WCTU was therefore not an innovative reforming, religious force, but it nevertheless welded Protestant women together into a pressure group. In other words, Christianity formed a strong bond for cohesion among women with similar religious and moral values.

Conversely, this overt Protestant proselytizing deterred people not attached to churches from joining the Union. Thus the CC/CP.WCTU was never able to present a united Christian front to fight for its causes. There is no doubt that, in many respects, this was an extremely difficult, if not impossible goal to achieve.

The same difficulty can be seen in the CC/CP.WCTU's attempts to reach all sections of the population with messages of Temperance and Purity which were associated with "fanatical"<sup>1</sup> Protestant women. Added to this was the strong loyalty to British imperialism, the implications of which were explored in Chapter 2. Political preference within the CC/CP.WCTU not only made religion a barrier to campaigning for Temperance and Purity

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1. G.1-'90, Minutes of the Liquor Laws Commission, 1889-91, p.78.



but erected cultural and political difficulties as well.

As a result of these factors the Temperance and Purity Campaigns did not have the impact on the Cape Colony which was envisaged by the CC/CP.WCTU. As argued in Chapters 3 and 4 there were significant alterations in the liquor laws in favour of temperance, but the WWCTU ideal of total prohibition was never achieved in the Cape Colony. Banning tobacco and drug abuse were aims of the Temperance Campaign which consistently met with resistance from the Cape Colonial or Union Governments.

The Purity Campaign's outreach programme to redeem prostitutes and enforce an equal standard code of moral conduct on both sexes, as examined in Chapter 5, was also not entirely successful. Again, one of the main causes for failure was the rigid ethical code set by the CC/CP.WCTU which did not attract many members and supporters from a lower-class background or from a non-Christian religion.

However, the real achievement of the CC/CP.WCTU was in arousing the collective consciousness of its members to the social, political, legal and economic inequality of women. As Tyrrell points out, WCTU policies are riddled with paradoxes, which worked both for and against its goals.<sup>2</sup> Christian ideology empowered the CC/CP.WCTU with the belief that it would succeed in its goals, as part of a divine plan even when faced by repeated failures. The Union therefore attracted dedicated Christians whose faith encouraged a positive attitude towards their own personal capabilities in steering their organization towards success and which resulted in a strong leadership, as discussed in Chapter 2.

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2. Tyrrell, Woman's World/Woman's Empire, p.9.

Another weakness, although also a strength, was the unshakeable confidence in the virtues of enforcing middle-class standards. Middle-class values fostered educational programmes to open higher and more varied education for girls and to educate women from the lower classes in elementary health rules. Eventually these expanded into well organized campaigns for better housing and health services. The great concern for the improvement of health, social welfare and educational facilities for women led to a desire to elevate the status of all women in the Cape Colony and empower them by obtaining suffrage. It is this which makes the CC/CP.WCTU part of the "first wave" feminist movement.<sup>3</sup>

Feminism includes the right of every woman to choose her own life style, the prerogative to run a home, raise children, engage in outside interests and have a career where she will be entitled to remuneration equal to any man employed in a similar capacity.<sup>4</sup> Importantly the CC/CP.WCTU was the first women's organization in the Cape Colony which encouraged women to seek higher wages, and campaigned for better working conditions for women factory workers, servants, office workers and shop assistants. Creches and day care facilities were started to care for children of working mothers from all classes. The Union also presented hundreds of petitions and organised many deputations to the Cape Parliament, Municipal Councils, Licensing Courts and any other authorities that could further its causes. The CC/CP.WCTU was therefore an active feminist group.<sup>5</sup>

As has been said, the CC/CP.WCTU believed that women should

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3. Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, p.78.

4. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.75.

5. Ibid., p.139.

enter the work place and compete with men in any field. In this respect, because of its well educated middle-class leadership, feminist members were encouraged to attempt to break into the male professional preserve of doctors and lawyers.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the CC/CP.WCTU participated in numerous social activities, managed their homes, reared children, taught and nursed but they also defied the conventional image of the "Victorian lady" who remained within the confines of her home, except for the occasional charitable expedition and who did not express an opinion of her own in public. Due to its new wave approach, the CC/CP.WCTU encouraged women to explore the WWCTU 's "Do-Everything-Policy" in order to discover new facets of their character. In this way the Union broadened the scope of women's experience and provided self-confidence by showing members how to speak in public and canvas support from the public.

CC/CP.WCTU members who participated in the more controversial campaigns, i.e. purity, employment rights and female suffrage, as argued in Chapter 5, publicly made the point that women were no longer prepared to accept their inferior status in the Cape Colony. This was a significant achievement. Members were encouraged to participate in municipal elections. Eventually women members were elected on Hospital and School Boards and Municipal Councils.

Despite its conservatism the CC/CP.WCTU also broke the social conventions of the time by encouraging its members to take part in cycling and other sporting activities and even to dress in less restrictive clothing. The CC/CP.WCTU also advocated that women control their own bodies and minds. They thus challenged

directly the Victorian male perception of helpless, hysterical females, unable to manage their own lives or sexuality. Although the Purity Campaign did not aim to grant women the same sexual freedom as males, their attack on prostitution was indeed a feminist advance. Women sought sexual equality and demanded that men share the same status of sexual purity they had enforced upon women.

As shown in Chapter 5, a woman worker for the CC/CP.WCTU Purity Campaign was obliged to discuss sexual subjects which were normally taboo. And by her involvement with prostitutes, she no longer led the sheltered life of ignorance on social circumstances or sexual matters which the "respectable middle-class woman" did. The CC/CP.WCTU was the first women's organization in the Cape Colony to liberate women in their ways of thinking and speaking about both personal and social sexual issues. In this way it introduced a strong feminist element into the Cape Colony.<sup>6</sup>

Most important in this regard was the Suffrage Campaign of the CC/CP.WCTU. The Union's strategy of using suffrage as a part of the programme to abolish alcohol and sexual vice succeeded in encouraging conservative middle-class women to work for the franchise, at that time a controversial issue. Therefore, the CC.WCTU was the first women's organization in the Cape Colony to encourage its members to challenge male propriety and custom in order to empower women.

It is important to note that the CC/CP.WCTU was the only WCTU Union in South Africa which consistently attempted to obtain women's suffrage for all races. As argued in Chapter 5, the

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6. Tierney, Women's Studies Encyclopedia, Vol.I, p.293.

CC.WCTU's greatest achievement towards feminist goals was the establishment of the Women's Enfranchisement League in 1907 which was the first suffrage organization in the Cape Colony open to women of all races.

Suffrage was granted only to White women in 1930 but the failure to obtain a racially free suffrage was not the fault of the CP.WCTU. The national women's enfranchisement movement concentrated entirely on the White vote and as shown in Chapter 5, the CP.WCTU was the only organization canvassing for a vote for Coloured and African women.

As has become clear in the course of this dissertation, there are many contradictions and paradoxes in the principles of the CC/CP.WCTU. Although they prefigure many of the tenets upon which modern feminism is based, the Union was a by-product of Victorian culture and must be seen within that historical context. Although temperance and other social issues confronted by the CC/CP.WCTU are still extremely relevant, they could not, today, form a feminist platform.

It is also useful to reflect upon a view which could regard these CC/CP.WCTU establishment women as a strong social current which undermined some crucial Victorian values while yet upholding others. To some degree they were campaigning for the abolition of the very society of which they were part, and in which (in many respects) they felt so at home. As well as a feminist study, this examination of the CC/CP.WCTU finds a home in Victorian studies.

In evaluating the contributions of the CC/CP.WCTU to the feminist cause, the greatest and most lasting achievement was in gaining some ground in political and social equality for women by

1930. The CC/CP.WCTU was the first organization to work towards equalizing the social, legal, economic and political status of women in the Cape Colony. The CC/CP.WCTU brought feminist concepts to the Cape Colony and fostered them for forty-one years. Even after suffrage had been granted to White women in 1930, the CP.WCTU continued to work for the rights of all women. The CC/CP.WCTU must be credited with contributing in a positive and constructive way to the advancement of feminism in South Africa.

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### A DISCUSSION OF THE SOURCES.

Very little research has been done on the history of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of the Cape Colony/Cape Province either in the United States or South Africa. Ian Tyrrell has written the only book on the United States organization, while some of the records of the Union in the Cape have found a place in the work of Elizabeth van Heyningen and Cheryl Walker.

Information on the leaders and on the ordinary members of the CC/CP.WCTU is scarce both in the files in the Cape Archives and the Union's newspaper, The White Ribbon. The Huguenot Seminary Collection, however, a rich collection of letters, diaries and articles, provides valuable insight into the personal opinions of some of the leaders, on temperance, purity, their colleagues in the CC/CP.WCTU, women's rights and even Victorian daily life in a British Colony.

Although the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes in the Women's Christian Temperance Union archival collection are handwritten and thus an important primary source, they are fairly brief and give little detail. I have therefore had to make use of the extensive and informative printed Minutes of the Annual Conventions and The White Ribbon. The Minutes are also useful as

## SOURCE LIST.

a more general source reflecting the outlook of middle-class, English-speaking Protestant, women in the Cape.

The White Ribbon provides an insight into the changes in women's lives brought about by the First World War and the advancement of technology. Although dealing principally with Union affairs, many of the broader issues which are emphasized are those which affected all women at that time.