

**A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH? THE  
TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT AND THE “DRINK  
QUESTION”, 1895-1933**

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**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Philosophy**

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**October 1999**

## Abstract.

The Temperance Movement was one of the most important and influential of the great nineteenth century social and moral reforming campaigns, firmly integrated with the central Victorian values of self-help, hard work and sobriety. As the values of the Victorian period dissipated with the rapidly changing social and ethical mores during the twentieth century, most historians have seen a similar demise in the role of the Temperance Movement.

The drink question, however, remained a significant issue with two Royal Commissions, unprecedented state intervention during the First World War and innumerable bills and legislative debate between 1895 and 1933. Equally, the Temperance Movement maintained its resolve, resolutely campaigning and lobbying, proving itself to still be a key factor in the drink debate. This thesis studies the role and activity of the Temperance Movement in the continuing national concern around drink between 1895 and the Peel Commission to the conclusion of the Amulree Commission in 1933. The thesis concentrates on the major temperance societies and examines their effect on English attitudes to the drink question

Despite its continued activity, the Temperance Movement failed to make a significant mark on policy toward drink during this period. The reasons for this are several - loss of political support, the changing nature of drink issues, and fragmentation in the Movement. The Temperance Movement was very heterogeneous, some organisations seeking moderate reform or moral suasion but the more radical campaigners demanded central or local prohibition. Such demands were the root cause of temperance division and a large factor in the loss of Liberal political support. With the Conservatives tied to the Trade, the Temperance Movement sought the assistance of the Labour Party but Labour's response during the period was vague and indecisive.

Social and moral arguments used by the Temperance Movement in its attempt to secure the abolition of the drink trade were being steadily eroded as secularism, post war cynicism

and a huge increase in leisure activities undermined older values. Demand for alcoholic beverages fell dramatically as did reported cases of drunkenness. Despite these changes drink remained on the political and social agenda, but with many temperance reformers disillusioned and dispirited the Movement failed to present a comprehensive and coherent abolition strategy

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### Acknowledgements.

I am indebted to the University of Central Lancashire for giving me the opportunity to take this research degree.

A special vote of thanks go to my family who had to put up with the many editions that I cajoled, or should that be forced them into reading and a thank you to Jude Boxhall who was for most of the research period an archivist of the Livesey Collection at the University.

I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking the many people who have helped me in the research particularly the staff of Mill Hill Library, Blackburn.

Finally, I would like to say a very special thank you to my supervisor Keith Vernon for his unremitting help and guidance and his patience and tenacity in reading and correcting the many drafts that I submitted.

## Introduction.

The control of addictive substances has long perplexed western societies; they are potentially very harmful and need to be controlled, but elimination of their use through full prohibition presents numerous problems. Today there is great debate around the 'drug question'; in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, it was the 'drink question,' and temperance reformers were as anxious to find the correct solution to their problem as are their modern counterparts. Temperance was one of the most important of the nineteenth century's great social and moral reform campaigns and ranked high among the public issues at the turn of the century. It was a campaign that had at its roots the central pillars of Victorian values - thrift, sobriety and hard work. In the nineteenth century the growth rate of the Temperance Movement was noteworthy. Many of the societies that were formed had close religious ties and could therefore rely on a somewhat captive audience. Militant reformers ensured that temperance remained in the focus of public attention in the nineteenth century and in doing so could rightfully claim to have been successful at seeking temperance reform. Whilst the significance of temperance in the Victorian period is beyond doubt, its impact in the twentieth century is much more difficult to ascertain. The drink question remained a topic of considerable debate and enquiry; temperance organisations continued to lobby and campaign yet what, in the early decades of the twentieth century, did all this actually amount to?

At the turn of the century, the Temperance Movement was a vast and heterogeneous body with many different organisations, each with their own approach to the problem of drink. Most fundamental was the divide between those favouring abstinence and moral suasion and those advocating legislative prohibition, but there were other divisions on religious lines and between moderate and hard line reformers. This investigation concentrates on the period 1895-1933; a period highly significant as it was during these years

that, despite considerable discussion of drink, the Temperance Movement was steadily marginalised into obscurity. Taking a broad approach, the thesis offers a study of the Temperance Movement and its responses to the drink question primarily at the level of national debate. It looks at the way the Temperance Movement was viewed by its adherents and by its main opponent, the liquor industry, and particularly by political parties and their supporters. This analysis will also highlight the most compelling impediment to the progress of temperance - lack of structural integrity. Although this wider perspective means that the activities of multifarious temperance considerations cannot be considered in detail, happily it can provide a framework of the changing positions of the Temperance Movement in the early twentieth century. In following this line of enquiry the thesis will be thematic and somewhat episodic but as is the nature of most historical research it will also follow a chronological line. This is important as the Temperance Movement had several pivotal points in its history, which are crucial when attempting to respond to the question: Was the Temperance Movement a force to be reckoned with?

### Literature Review

Many historians have concentrated on the rise in alcoholic consumption in the early and mid-Victorian periods and the resulting response by the Temperance Movement. Brian Harrison made a major contribution to our understanding but did not go further than 1875. From its inception, the Temperance Movement's doctrine of personal abstinence and moral suasion seemed to offer a solution to many of the ills that plagued society during the major part of the nineteenth century. Temperance reform became so much a part of social and political debate that Harrison is right to suggest that the Temperance Movement had achieved 'a partial victory over their enemy.' (1) By the end of the nineteenth century however social changes had brought doubt to the mind-set of many temperance reformers and the

Temperance Movement had not fully achieved a single one of its objectives. L. L. Shiman argues that among some teetotalers there was a growing suspicion that their traditional position suggesting a causal relationship between poverty and drink may have been erroneous and that perhaps there were other reasons for poverty besides drink. She suggests that in the twentieth century 'temperance was never the vital force that it was in the nineteenth century,' arguing that, 'the Temperance Movement did not make England free from drink,' and its decline was attributable to 'its frames of reference and values lacking validity.' (2) J. B. Brown, however, suggests that many radical temperance reformers by the early twentieth century accepted the widespread existence of 'economic' poverty i.e., poverty caused through no moral fault of the pauper, a fact demonstrated in the work by J. Rowntree and A. Snowden (3) At the same time the growth in socialism emphasised that environmental changes could dramatically change the lives of many. As Victorian certainties eroded, the Temperance Movement faced the problem of defining the nature of the drink question.

The practice of personal abstinence from intoxicants or 'teetotalism' had been the moral objective of a determined Temperance Movement in the early Victorian period, but with the formation of the United Kingdom Alliance in 1853, prohibition became the goal of many temperance reformers. Supporters of prohibition were not satisfied with the minimalist position of moral suasion and demanded enforced total abstinence for the individual which fundamentally altered the nature of temperance campaigning. The answer to the drink question for prohibitionists was legislation and they would have been encouraged by the statements made by social commentators such as T. H. Green, who asserted in 1881 that 'drink is the greatest impediment to freedom that exists in England.' Green used temperance legislation as an example of the way in which the liberal state was justified in interfering in individuals' lives in order to encourage the achievement of their true potential. (4) This brought the Temperance Movement directly into political manoeuvres as it sought positive



legislation. In the first instance the Temperance Movement needed a sympathetic political party that was both in tune with its thinking and one that could secure temperance law. Steeped in Methodist doctrine the Temperance Movement found a political ally in the sympathetic Liberal Party. Fahey suggests that the Liberals became so enthusiastic over temperance that during the late 1880s and early 1890s the British Liberal Party endorsed Direct Local Veto, under which localities could by referendum prohibit the sale of alcoholic drink. (5) This Veto was championed by Liberal MP and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Harcourt, who was supported by the Advanced Temperance Party which was dominated by the United Kingdom Alliance (UKA). (6)

With a Conservative Party supporting the freedom of the Trade and a Liberal Party seemingly committed to temperance legislation the drink question had become a political issue. Fahey has suggested that it was expedient for the Liberal Party to embrace temperance but it soon became clear that some Liberal MPs had begun to doubt the wisdom of such an allegiance. Dingle focused his research on the UKA between 1873 and 1895 and formed the conclusion that the UKA had forced the Liberal Party into such a political predicament over its campaign for some form of prohibition that the prohibitionists' vote had become 'too dear at the price.' He also argued that the prohibitionists were wrong in assuming that the reverses suffered by the UKA were no more than a temporary setback. (7) Evidence to support this will be seen in the conclusions reached by the Peel Commission when it suggested a postponement of the Veto for an indefinite period. Dingle may be right in suggesting that calls for prohibition or the more watered down version of Local Veto had reached its pinnacle at the end of the nineteenth century and Brake has suggested that it was 'a movement that seemed unable to break from its past.' (8)

Drink however remained an issue of considerable debate, to which the Temperance Movement contributed, nor was their influence in Parliament completely ineffective. Many

MPs supported temperance but whatever their fervour, they could not muster sufficient support to carry any substantive bills. The fight against intemperance was not confined just to seeking prohibition. Many of the other less radical societies continued to seek a solution through moral suasion and in their research, G.F.Williams and G.T.Brake argued that notwithstanding legislative failures, the Temperance Movement had never been stronger and up to the First World War remained a threat to the Trade. (9) This is supported by K. Hawkins' research which indicates that whilst the more extreme temperance organisations continued to lose support in the country as a whole, the continuous flow of Local Veto bills suggests that those MPs who favoured temperance were still capable of taking the offensive. He suggests that the failure of the Temperance Movement to get any of these bills enacted was not due to the power of the pro-trade lobby (10) The political and propaganda strength of the liquor industry or the Trade as it became known, has been somewhat down played by historians such as Hawkins and Gutzke. Gutzke suggests that economic inequalities between brewers and retailers was a source of unease. Their economic solidarity was the fundamental source of the Trade's political power yet by the beginning of the twentieth century economic rivalry had engendered discord. Brewers reduced the funding to many Trade associations, hindering agitation against Liberal legislation and demoralising provincial retailers. (11) The arguments raised by Hawkins and Gutzke have a certain validity but, despite any divisive shortcomings that the Trade may have had, it retained enormous unity and power when threatened.

Arguably the most significant advance in temperance reform came during the First World War which has been analysed by Turner. He suggests that both the temperance question and the fortunes of the brewing industry were in flux on the eve of the war, although with a Temperance Movement stagnant and embarrassed. (12) The outbreak of war, however, brought some encouragement for the Temperance Movement as it spotted an opportunity for

wartime prohibition which it lobbied for fiercely. Controls which were far short of prohibition proved enormously effective in reducing consumption and drunkenness but, as Turner argues, these should not be seen as a temperance measure. (13) By comparison the American experiment with Prohibition (1920-1933) was an outstanding achievement for temperance crusaders which, whatever its consequences, gave considerable support to campaigns in other countries. With Local Veto still an issue with many the Temperance Movement turned to the Labour Party for support. Drink clearly continued to be an issue of debate in the Labour movement and its solutions varied from Local Veto and nationalisation to personal abstinence. In his study Jones concentrates on these dilemmas facing the Labour Party and concludes that Labour activists did not know how Labour would deal with the drink problem when it came to power and chose the easy option by appointing another Royal Commission. (14)

The literature thus leaves us with a number of questions, alternative interpretations and major omissions. Some see the Temperance Movement as effectively finished at the end of the nineteenth century, others during the First World War. Some see a powerful movement and a weakened Trade. Drink and temperance are dismissed as an issue at the turn of the century, yet there was a major Royal Commission in 1929. Noticeably absent from much of the accounts is study of what the Temperance Movement did do in this period. What did it contribute to the debate? How did it relate to the political parties? Did the analysis of the drink issue change? What was the position on licensing reform, control, nationalisation and American Prohibition? In the following chapters, through a study of the leading temperance journals and advocates, the disparate positions of the Temperance Movement will be analysed alongside the existing studies of major pivotal points in the drink question in this period.

## Thesis Structure

The prime objective of the Temperance Movement was the abolition of the drink traffic. Moral suasion was seen as potentially the best way of achieving this goal but with the birth of the UKA and its prohibition aims, legislation became the target. In the nineteenth century many attempts had been made to get temperance legislation through the House of Commons but with little success. The first chapter will briefly examine the position of the principal demands which comprised the Temperance Movement as it approached the end of the nineteenth century and will be combined with an analysis of its political fortunes. Its main political ally, the Liberal Party, had vigorously campaigned during the 1895 general election on a manifesto that declared its support for the implementation of Local Veto. The Liberal Party's failure to win at this election was largely blamed on this pledge and it was not until 1905 that it managed to get back into government. It won the subsequent elections of 1908 and the 'constitutional crisis' election of 1910, but from 1916 formed only part of a coalition until 1922, when the Labour party became the party of opposition to the Conservatives. Despite the loss of the 1895 election, the Temperance Movement managed to secure a Royal Commission on the Licensing Laws which began its enquiries in 1896 and produced Majority and Minority Reports in 1899. It was an ideal opportunity for the Temperance Movement to present its case and to secure change to the legislation and the study will attempt to show why it failed to do so.

Liberal defeats at the 1895 and 1900 general elections and unfavourable conclusions from the Peel Commission left the Temperance Movement somewhat bewildered but still determined to see its policies accepted. The second chapter will examine the strength and fortitude of the Temperance Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century through to the start of the First World War. The Liberal Party still well-disposed held power from 1905 until the war time coalition government. During this period a bill was introduced into

Parliament which had as its principal objective a reduction in the number of on-licenses. The temperance organisations led by the UKA, mobilised support throughout the country and the Trade apprehensive about the continual activity of the Temperance Movement, both nationally and locally, and the frequent appearance of 'local option' bills in Parliament, launched a vigorous opposition. The bill was successful in its passage through the House of Commons, but was rejected by The House of Lords. However strong the support for change, still had sufficient influence in the corridors of power to thwart change. Nevertheless, temperance forces had never been stronger, more ably led or supported, or with so much parliamentary influence as in 1908. There was no inclination to accept defeat and it is therefore right to suggest that, up to the First World War, the Temperance Movement remained a threat to the Trade and a force to be reckoned with in Parliament.

No event of the twentieth century had more far-reaching and long lasting effects on the control of retailing and consumption of liquor than the 1914-1918 war. Drink was seen as a threat to the war effort and temperance advocates like Lloyd George remained convinced that 'drink is doing more damage in the war than all the German submarines put together.'

(15) For many in the Temperance Movement the solution could only be found through prohibition, but the government went for control and areas of state management like the Carlisle experiment. This experiment in the public ownership of the liquor trade meant that the municipality of Carlisle controlled the manufacture, distribution and sale of the majority of alcoholic beverages consumed within its boundaries. The regulation of licensing hours and most of the control measures imposed by the Central Control Board, became largely responsible for a dramatic fall in liquor consumption. It was a reduction for which the Temperance Movement claimed a large responsibility but which, in many ways, undermined its credibility. Many, including some temperance reformers, began to question this credibility gap and concluded that state control had been successful. In 1921 this regulation experiment

was ended with the introduction of a Licensing Act. It was an Act which the Temperance Movement bitterly opposed, prophesying a return to the pre war levels of drinking. In America, however, temperance campaigning achieved full prohibition on the 16th January 1920. The third chapter will review these wartime control measures and will examine how prohibition was achieved in the United States but not in the UK. It will also examine how the Temperance Movement responded to these issues and in doing so will draw comparisons from the secondary literature. Dramatic falls in the levels of alcoholic consumption were due to the regulations but they coincided with huge increases in leisure activities as many abandoned social institutions like the public house and the church. The decline in church attendance was mirrored in the attendances at many temperance society meetings prompting the Temperance Movement into serious introspection. Traditional views on Local Veto had been replaced by an acceptance that the idea of control could be seen as a temperance measure and a belief that the way ahead could be found through education and more social responsibility. An examination of these conflicts of interest will conclude the chapter.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the Temperance Movement continued its socio-political crusade, but its efforts were pinned to a set of Victorian values which were being steadily eroded by a more secular leisure seeking public. Its energy, already dissipated by division, began to ebb away, despite feelings of strength and confidence. The Temperance Movement did rely upon political support and with the Conservatives tied to the Trade it sought cooperation with an acquiescent Liberal Party. When this relationship began to fail it turned to the only other game in town; the Labour Party. However, the growth in socialism caused further political dilemmas for the Temperance Movement. It was challenged by Labour and socialist propaganda as its sentiments were perceived to be counter productive since it disguised the capitalist roots of economic and social deprivation

(16) In the nineteenth century the Labour movement was certainly concerned about the drink

question, mainly because drink was regarded as a cause of self-inflicted poverty. The Labour Party does not appear to have embraced temperance with the same apparent fervour as the Liberals but as Jones suggests, temperance was still salient in the inter-war years causing much dissension in the ranks of organised labour. (17)

This study will be concluded by an examination of the second Royal Commission into the licensing laws which was established by a Labour government in 1929. This was set against a background where the Trade, between 1921 and 1933, relentlessly sought changes to the beer duty and to the licensing laws. The Royal Commission of 1929-1931 provided once again an ideal platform for the Temperance Movement to express its views, particularly in the light of the American prohibition experiment. With a century's experience dealing with many shades of political points of view, it had seen its political fortunes both decline and flourish, it had witnessed a society traumatised by war and the imposition of draconian legislation, but once again it failed to rise to the occasion.

## Notes.

- (1) Harrison, B. Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England. 1815-1873 (London 1971) p.347
- (2) Shiman, L. L. Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England. (New York 1988) pp.212, 247.
- (3) Brown, J. B. 'The Pig or the Sty: Drink and Poverty in Late Victorian England.' *International Review of Social History*, 18 (1973) p.384.
- (4) Nicholson, P. P. 'T. H. Green and State Action: Liquor Legislation.' *History of Political Thought*. V1. 3. (1985). p.516.
- (5) Fahey, D. M. 'The Politics of Drink: Pressure Groups and the British Liberal Party, 1883-1908.' *Social Science*. (1979). p.76.
- (6) Fahey, The Politics of Drink. p.76
- (7) Dingle, A. E. The Campaign for Prohibition in Victorian England. (New Jersey 1980) p.7
- (8) Brake, G.T. Drink, Ups and Downs of Methodist Attitudes to Temperance. (London 1974)
- (9) Williams, G. P. & Brake, G. T. Drink in Great Britain 1900-1979. (1980) p.7.
- (10) Hawkins, K. The Conduct and Development of the Brewing Industry in England and Wales 1880-1938. University of Bradford PhD. (1981) p.501.
- (11) Gutzke, D. W. 'Protecting the Pub. Brewers and Publicans Against Temperance.' (1989) pp.8-9.
- (12) Turner, J. 'State Purchase of the Liquor Trade in the First World War.' *The Historical Journal*, 23, 3 (1980) p.591
- (13) Turner, 'State Purchase' p.614
- (14) Jones, S. G. 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question in Britain, 1918-1939.'



*The Historical Journal*, 30, 1 (1987) p.107.

- (15) George, Lloyd. War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (London, 1934) 1. p.17)
- (16) Harrison, Drink and the Victorians. pp.397-405
- (17) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.120

Introduction

From its early beginnings in the 1830s, the Temperance Movement had tried to persuade people to abstain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages, highlighting the medical and economic pitfalls awaiting the drinker. With the inception of the UKA in 1853 and its demands for prohibition, attention shifted away from a persuasive course of action to a political one. With the Conservatives resolutely supporting the Trade, the Temperance Movement formed an alliance with a responsive and almost acquiescent Liberal Party. Towards the end of the nineteenth century industrial growth had spawned many trade unions and with them came the demand for political recognition. Many barriers continued to confront the overtures made by the Movement towards this body of people, not least was the belief that the 'teetotalers were in league with the employers in keeping the level of wages low.' (1) Middle-class professionals, social reformers, the clergy and the Temperance Movement, joined forces in questioning the damaging effects of excess drinking. National efficiency and eugenics became subjects that were openly discussed and were thought to have their origins in the social conditions of the working class which, again, was tied in to alcoholic consumption. Despite the fact that towards the end of the nineteenth century the figures for drunkenness began to fall, the Temperance Movement continued to cant its old themes, stressing the social, moral and economic waste symbolised by the national drink bill.

If the Temperance Movement had a long way to go in convincing the labour movement that they had their interests at heart, there was a growing awareness of the political strength of the Trade. There was also the perception, particularly amongst temperance reformers, that the Trade's huge financial resources enabled it to act as a powerful pressure group, ensuring the failure of any attempts to legislate against it. There is no doubt that the Temperance

Movement, together with its political supporters, had fought long and hard to get changes to the licensing laws through the House of Commons (see appendix 1). MPs from both parties actively supported such legislation, but it is legitimate to state that the Liberal Party was recognised as the party of temperance, whilst the Conservative Party was the party of the Trade.

For there to be an understanding of temperance and politics we need to examine briefly the structure of the Temperance Movement as it approached the end of the nineteenth century and the nature of temperance as a political issue. The 1895 Liberal/temperance pact failed to convince the electorate of the merits of Local Veto and a victorious and somewhat magnanimous Conservative government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the licensing laws. This section deals with both these issues and concludes with an examination on the Movement's position.

### The Temperance Movement

The founders of the Temperance Movement sought to change society's attitude towards drinking by moral suasion through a personal pledge to renounce alcohol. With the birth of the UKA in 1853, prohibition offered a solution and with it the need for legislation. The movement needed an understanding public and a political party that were sympathetic to its demands and capable of effecting change. The growth in the number of temperance societies and their individual membership, however, was both a blessing and a curse. They could legitimately declare themselves to be a powerful social force, capable of pressure group activity in the pursuit of legislative change, but because of the way individual temperance societies approached the solution to the 'drink problem,' they failed to achieve a consensus.

The radical UKA led from the front with its demands for prohibition, but it was joined by other societies who variously demanded: total abstinence for the individual, Sunday closing,

Direct Local Veto and no compensation. (2) These societies formed the Advanced Temperance Party which had amongst its members, the British Temperance League (BTL), the UKA, the Independent Order of Good Templars, the National Temperance League and many others. The Advanced Temperance Party consisted of so many societies that it tended to dominate over other temperance campaigners in its agitation against the drinking customs of society, and the public house that ministered to them. The Advanced Temperance Society claimed to have made 'six million people free from this mass of human corruption' and that if there was a universal acceptance of total abstinence it would see 'the practical extinction of poverty, drunkenness, crime, and vice.' (3) Although the figures produced by W. S. Caine, secretary of the Advanced Temperance Society, are unlikely to be accurate, it was extremely difficult to estimate the proportion of non-drinkers in any given population. The UKA's secretary, James Whyte, giving evidence before the Peel Commission in 1898, suggested the number of total abstainers in the UK to be about eight million. (4) Rowntree and Sherwell in their research estimated the number of 'teetotalers and practical abstainers fifteen years and over, as three million.' (5) Wright suggests that by the end of the nineteenth century, the efforts of the various temperance organisations may have increased the proportion of the adult male population which abstained as compared with the previous generation. (6) Blurring the issue still further was the increasing tendency of women to drink; a fact borne out by the increasing workloads of the Police Court Missions to Women. (7)

The demands made by the Advanced Temperance Party were not echoed by societies such as the influential Church of England Temperance Society (CETS). This society, founded in 1862, had two distinguishing characteristics. (8) In the first place it consisted of two sections - one for teetotalers and one for those who pledged themselves only to moderation. For that reason the society was uninterested in prohibition; favouring changes to the licensing system. At first the CETS was viewed as being apolitical as its diocesan structure meant that it was

highly decentralised. No branch could be formed without the permission of the parish incumbent and the history of the CETS can be said to be the history of the many clergymen who unstintingly devoted their time and efforts to the temperance cause. Though many clergymen saw drink as their greatest hindrance, and the principal reason for the depravity that was to be found in many working-class districts, there were 'cosseted clergymen' who had little idea of such problems and who refused to join the campaign. They did so because they did not want to offend many of their conscientious workers, or incur the wrath of many of their elders and deacons, many of whom were interested in the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.

Many of the clergy who had identified themselves as temperance advocates became responsible for major changes in their parishes. Schools, hospitals and the rebuilding of almshouses were just a few of the innovations. Besides the wide spreading temperance work in many towns, it was in the cities where the changes were judged to be needed the most. In the Liverpool diocese of 203 parishes there were 128 adult branches, 149 juvenile branches, and 20 women's branches. Public meetings and conferences, as well as simple scientific lectures on the harmful effects of alcohol, were held throughout the diocese. At the same time, Police Court Missions to Women were being set up. By the end of the century, the CETS was the largest temperance society in the UK. In 1899 it had 7000 branches, 100 Police Court Missions and between 150,000 and 200,000 subscribing members. The CETS did try to become more involved in seeking changes to the legislation; in 1885, E. Howard MP and vice-chairman of the CETS, introduced into the House of Commons a bill drafted with the help of the CETS providing for licensing boards with the power to control the days and hours of opening and closing, but not in anyway to extend them. Refusing the continuance of a licence would be offset by compensation to the value of the goodwill of the business and any expenses incurred in its refusal. The Advanced Temperance Society refused

to support a Bill that contained a compensation clause - a position which estranged it from much temperance opinion. (9)

Adding to the confusion were other religious forces like Methodism which was particularly strong in the north midlands and the north of England. (10) The Methodist reaction to the 'evils of drink' had not always seen it condemned. Many officials and ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Society were bitterly opposed to teetotalism. They treated the advance of teetotalism with contempt and scorn and denounced temperance reformers as 'dangerous fanatics' and 'teachers of heresy.' The Rev Dr. John Edgar had declared that, 'he entertained the most confirmed abhorrence of teetotalism, as insulting to God and disgraceful to man.' (11) Change was on the way however, with publications like the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* suggesting that more Wesleyan Methodists had been 'degraded by the sin of intemperance than any other.' and that the way forward must be by 'the guard of abstinence.' (12) This was echoed in the *Wesleyan Times* when it declared its support for total and entire abstinence. Support for temperance quickly grew, and resulted in the final establishment of the Wesleyan Temperance Society under the direction and auspices of the Annual Methodist Conference. (13) A series of resolutions passed at Conferences in the 1880s and 1890s demanded a more effective control of the liquor traffic, a reduction in the number of public and beer houses and Sunday closing. Opinions appearing in the *Methodist Recorder* were pessimistic, however, regarding the chances of achieving changes in the legislation, believing that the Conservatives relied too heavily on the Trade at the polling booths, and that the Liberals were equally unreliable. From the *Recorder's* perspective 'all conceivable types of government are, at this present moment, dominated by the Trade.' (14)

Within the Temperance Movement other organisations quickly developed whose structures and ideologies were to prove counter productive to its general aims. One such

organisation was the Band of Hope whose principal aim was to ensure that children were imbued with the principle of self help and alive to the dangers of drink. It was a generic organisation, but despite its original and all encompassing objectives many questioned its ability to produce adult teetotalers (15) It did help to transform attitudes towards the role of children in society, but divisions within its general structure became evident when provincial Band of Hope societies, like the Lancashire and Cheshire Band of Hope Union, opposed the middle-class methods of Metropolitan Unions. Almost from the beginning, the Metropolitan Organisations had a board which consisted of a titled patron, a churchman, and sixteen vice presidents, twelve of whom were ministers of religion. (16) Further evidence of the split along class lines, can be seen in the vain attempts by many of the Temperance Movement's Bands of Hope, to accommodate the children of the slums. Ill educated children were seen as a drain on the limited resources available and as a consequence were excluded from the system. Thus the very class of children whose futures were likely to be tied into an environment of intemperance, were excluded from the movement. (17) Ironically, many that fitted into the 'middle class category' viewed the children's Temperance Movement as strictly working-class organisations and avoided them. Temperance reformers unhappy with this situation and attempting to overcome the Movement's lower-class image, set up a special association for middle-class children which they called the Young Abstainers. (18) When the CETS was organising juvenile groups in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it also set up a separate society to work among the middle-class children. (19)

With the many temperance societies seemingly following different strategies, such as moral suasion or prohibition or that followed by the CETS, it is difficult to draw a balanced picture of temperance sentiment in the UK at the end of the nineteenth century. Each society believed that its solution to the drink question was the right one and as a consequence became guilty of acting as 'the sum total of all their assemblies in England.' (20) Although

the UKA's demand for prohibition dominated, there were so many proposals for legislation that the UKA secretary, W S. Caine commented that 'the moment the practical politician leaves our anchorage he is tossed upon the sea of the licensing reformer.' (21) Of the many bills before Parliament in 1893 it was the CETS Bill, the Manchester Bill, and the Westminster Bill that were continually referred to. The CETS Bill suggested that a local *ad hoc* board, popularly elected, should be given powers that would run right up to prohibition. The Manchester Bill would prohibit by a three-fourth majority, and the Westminster Bill by a two third majority. From the UKA's point of view, and that of the Advanced Temperance Party, the demand was for 'a bare majority on the principle that if any difference is to be made at all, it should rather lean to the side of sobriety than of intemperance. (22) They demanded 'a Veto for the United Kingdom to be applied wherever and whenever there is a community ready to free itself from the curse of drink.' (23)

These three bills were far more stringent than the Local Control Bill proposed by the Liberal MP Sir W. Harcourt in that they did deal with the number of licensed premises and at the same time gave safeguards to the clubs. Harcourt was a veteran prohibitionist and largely responsible for the Liberal leadership adopting the Veto. (24) Under Harcourt's Bill there was no provision to close all the taverns in any one parish, if the licensing justices thought otherwise. The magistrates could licence the sale of drink even where veto was adopted, and they could licence any tavern if it were called a small hotel. (25) The Bill provided that the taverns not called hotels or restaurants alone should be vetoed, but that 'four-sixths' instead of 'five-sixths' should be a sufficient majority. (26) A Mr. Lowry, a Liverpool member of the Committee of the National Conservative and Unionist Temperance Association, which was amalgamated with the CETS, believed that prohibition was an impossible achievement, but was in favour of a 'gradual reduction.' (27) Lowry was against direct popular control suggesting that 'it was one sided' and Local Veto 'was an uncertain method of reducing



public houses.' (28) Lowry may well have been referring to the Trade's grip on a large group of working-class males, already handily organised with a vested interest in protecting the pub. Friendly societies and trade unions, two numerically large and important institutions, held meetings in public houses not simply out of choice, but necessity.

The disunity brought about by the many different approaches to liquor reform tended to undermine the apparently buoyant position of the Temperance Movement, and at the same time succeeded in confusing the public's perception of its true aims and objectives. National opinion had accepted the existence of moderate drinking, but at the same time had also recognised that some detailed reform was needed. The creation of this moderate opinion was seen by many outsiders as the finest achievement of the temperance reformers, but others castigated this caution. The moderates, cautious about property rights, aimed only at removing the worst abuses from the liquor traffic but did not seem to know how while radicals often suspected their own goal was impossible. (29) How this was to translate into practical policies therefore seemed an intractable problem.

### The Politics of Temperance

By the late nineteenth century temperance had become a major political issue. The Liberal Party allied itself to many of the Temperance Movement's convictions, whereas the Conservative Party, in their desire to protect the 'freedom of the individual' became increasingly 'tied to the Trade. The social and economic changes which maintained drink as a major issue were far reaching and gave added urgency to temperance demands. Through the nineteenth century, the evolution of the Temperance Movement became linked to and dependent upon a sympathetic social system in which it could operate and recruit. Initially, moral suasion was seen as the optimum solution to the drink problem, but by the end of the century it was clear to many temperance reformers that:

... the reform of the liquor laws has become a political question of the first magnitude which no politician can ignore and no MP or aspiring candidate can hope to evade or ignore. (30)

Prohibition demanded by the UKA was the dominant, approach to legislative change while more moderate groups favoured licensing reform to limit the Trade. Politicians had not ignored the 'drink question' in the past, but reference to Appendix 1 confirms the number of times that licensing bills had failed.

Demands for prohibition had turned temperance reform into an overtly political issue which had a considerable number bills, however unsuccessful. The issue moreover had become party political as Liberals increasingly supported temperance, and Conservatives the opposing Trade interests. Home Rule for Ireland had increased ideological schisms within both sides of the political divide and Liberal Unionists demanded a new temperance initiative that would not only unite the party but would, it was hoped, gain the Liberal Party more support. With W S. Caine as the Liberal Unionist's Chief Whip and the formation of the Westminster Licensing Reform Committee, composed chiefly of Liberal Unionists, the opportunity for temperance reform had never been more favorable. At the turn of the century the changing social, economic and political climate offered other opportunities for the Temperance Movement to adapt its propaganda which seemed to be producing results. Increasing concern over the squalor that blighted the lives of many working class families had resulted in many social surveys. Typical of such research was that undertaken by Charles Booth when he investigated the poor of London. Such surveys enabled the Temperance Movement to highlight, with some justification, that drink was the cause of so much poverty. (31) A study by Seebohm Rowntree in 1901 in York added to this poverty argument. Concern was also being expressed over physical and racial degeneration and moral decline. A new factor in the political fortunes of the Temperance Movement was the growth in trade unionism, which had found a political voice through the formation of the Independent Labour

Party in 1893. The growing strength of unionism, the formation of a possible third force in British politics, and the identification of the causes of many of society's ills meant that the Temperance Movement was offered many other avenues from which they could garner support and at the same time provide credence to their arguments. For favourable legislation to reach the Statute Book, the Temperance Movement needed public opinion on its side and Members of Parliament who reflected such opinion in their voting patterns. The Temperance Movement could not sponsor its own parliamentary candidates, and even if it could, the two way party political system, Liberal/Conservative, that still existed at the end of the century would have made sure that temperance candidates received little sympathy from the electorate. Many MPs, however, openly supported and campaigned for temperance legislation, primarily in the Liberal Party. T. H. Green, the liberal political philosopher and a vice-president of the UKA, had asserted in 1881 that 'drink is the greatest impediment to freedom that exists in England. (32) Green was in favour of the liberty of the individual, but wanted state action to limit the liquor traffic. Liberalism was avowedly more 'ideological' than Conservatism. Most Liberal voters did not, even so, spend hours brooding over tracts on the philosophy of liberty, but they frequently expressed a desire to advance the cause of individual freedom and remove the obstacles in the path of the talented. (33) As it often does, political pragmatism overruled ideology and the Liberal Party favoured radical temperance reform because it thought that it would win them votes and these extremists, often ill-disguised prohibitionists were themselves ardently political in their methods. They favoured heavy taxation of the Trade and a sharp reduction in the number of liquor outlets without compensation. For many temperance reformers there existed a mutuality between the Liberal Party and the more radical temperance societies. This was confirmed by the secretary of the UKA, W. S. Caine, when he said that, 'we can secure nothing without their (Liberal) help. We are equally sure they cannot carry the constituencies without ours. (34) By 1895,

temperance reform had become a manifesto commitment. The call for Local Veto or Local Option and its first definition Direct Veto, had been around since the middle of the nineteenth century. Veto implied ban or prohibition whereas option signified choice. Whatever term was used it still meant the same thing, the right of 'any community to free itself from the curse of the liquor traffic.' (35)

For the Conservatives it was the freedom of the individual that was paramount and temperance reform threatened the right to hold property in freedom. They argued that confiscation of licenses might establish a precedent for interference with other types of property and were therefore sympathetic to the Trade's claims of unfair treatment. The very profitability of the Trade gave it 'unlimited funds' to fight the anti-drink campaign whilst the large number of licensed premises, (156,000 in 1896) were a ready-made network of meeting places and propaganda points. (36) The potential power of the Trade was noted by Ensor when he concluded that, 'nearly every public house in the UK was an active committee room for the Conservative Party.' (37) It is understandable that the Conservatives were reluctant to inflict damage on an industry that performed such sterling service at election times. Thus Conservatives were reluctant to stop people from having a drink, if they could pay for it, while the Liberals thought that some restrictions were beneficial to the individual and to society generally.

The Liberal Party approached the 1895 general election with a campaign that was specifically geared towards Local Veto. The Party had committed itself in the Newcastle Programme of 1891 to the enactment of permissive legislation granting a referendum for the Local Veto of the licensing of the sale of drink. (38) There was a history of Direct Veto Bills that had come before the House of Commons but had failed to reach the statute book. (see Appendix 1) In 1864 the first vote was taken on the Direct Veto, then embodied in the Permissive Bill introduced by Sir Wilfred Lawson; it was defeated by a majority of 257. In

1868 the majority against fell to 106; in 1871 to 72; in 1879, on a resolution, it was 88. It was also in 1871 that H. A. Bruce, the Home Secretary, saw his Licensing Bill withdrawn. In 1880 however, the Temperance Movement witnessed its first success when the same resolution was carried by a majority of 26. In 1891, a Conservative government carried the second reading of the Direct Veto Bill for Wales by a majority of seven and in 1893 Sir William Harcourt, a member of Gladstone's cabinet, introduced a Veto bill. Harcourt's experience at the Home Office had convinced him that many crimes were entirely due to heavy drinking suggesting that 'eight out of ten men sent to the gallows owed it to excessive drinking.' (39) The bill, however, depended on a two thirds majority in a referendum on prohibition which was unlikely anywhere, and excluded from the scope of the referendum many of the places where the middle classes got their drink, such as hotels and restaurants. (40) Harcourt's 1893 bill failed to get a second reading and was withdrawn and the public's unpopularity towards Local Veto was endorsed at the 1895 election. Wright and Fahey suggest, however, that the Liberal manifesto commitment to Local Veto was not as clear cut as it would seem. Although Gladstone had endorsed Direct Local Veto, he doubted its practical value as a method of temperance reform. (41) The nature of the Vetoistm position meant that it tended to attract support from those temperance reformers who were by their nature the most uncompromising or, as many as their opponents claimed most fanatical. Secondly it was the Vetoists who had a more immediate motive than any other group for promulgating as vigorously as possible the idea that Direct Local Veto was the only acceptable solution. (42) What these attempts clearly show is that there was a willingness on the part of both Liberal and Conservative governments to at least debate the Local Veto issue, despite, apparently, being unwilling to see it reach the Statute Book. What it did for the Temperance Movement was give it a platform, no matter how tenuous, that allowed its arguments to be aired.

Local Veto was an integral part of the Advanced Temperance Party's licensing reform platform and despite these continual setbacks was unlikely to surrender what they perceived as 'our impregnable position,' which looked like it might succeed. (43) By 1895 however, several of the more thoughtful temperance leaders, like A.F.Hills, warned that 'neither progressive prohibitionists nor moderate reductionists can afford to fight without each others help.' (44) The Bishop of Chester, Dr. J. F. Jayne thought that the weakness of temperance policy lay in its inherently negative characteristics. He suggested that disinterested trusts might control drink sales under the auspices of the state as in the Gothenberg system. (45) Such companies should ensure that licensed houses became genuine refreshment houses which might promote the 'innocent enjoyment' of the people. (46) Jayne was not alone in rethinking licence reform. Others like the Bishop of Manchester and the wealthy Unionist shipbuilder, Arnold Hills, proposed varying schemes. None was more radical than the suggestion that the UKA and the CETS join forces. But Caine declared in 1893 that the position of the Advanced Temperance Party remained as it always had; Sunday closing, Direct Veto, No Compensation. (47) Caine went further by accusing those who followed a different line that all they did was confuse practical politicians.

The forces of temperance did combine effectively enough at moments of great importance like general elections, but their different approaches to establishing a permanent solution to the liquor problem were always just below the surface. The inflexible nature of the vetoist solution for instance, attracted fanatical supporters of outright prohibition which in turn made it almost impossible for any other moderate temperance proposals to be voiced. The claim by the supporters of Local Veto that one of the two major parties had adopted the specific policy they advocated was justifiable. The problem with this stance was that it presented the supporters of temperance and the general public with a take it or leave it situation. Electors were asked by the North of England Temperance League to 'weigh well the issue; consider

what defeat means and what victory will give.’ (48) Moderate temperance reformers from organisations like the CETS, earnestly canvassed Parliamentary candidates, of all persuasions, for their support. Those temperance supporters already unhappy with the vetoists election manifesto, were also plagued by the old problem of whether a vote should be cast for party or for temperance reform?

Added to the problems of the Temperance Movement during the election campaign was the ‘volcanic energy’ with which the Trade clashed head on with the anti-drink brigade. (49) London publicans, for instance, were able to mount a cohesive strategy against all the temperance candidates, mainly due to customer affiliation. Cards and posters were placed in the windows of many licensed houses, proclaiming that ‘this house will be closed if the Liberals get elected.’ Many people were not clear on what Local Veto meant, and the Trade was quick to exploit this ignorance proclaiming that ‘all public houses would be closed and total prohibition imposed on the working classes.’ (50) The Trade countered the Local Veto attack by suggesting, to the working class in particular that publicans were able to offer cheap, warm and well-lit rooms. Brewers defended the Trade as ‘defending the right of your lodge to meet were it likes free from dictation,’ and assailed Local Veto as ‘an outrageous specimen of class legislation.’ (51) Public houses were the only places of relaxation outside the home which were usually within easy walking distance, opened their doors from early morning to nearly midnight and charged no entry fee. (52) Trade societies were also quick to protect their interests. The Yorkshire Victualler Defence League issued an appeal to its members to use their ‘enormous power’ in defence of their just rights and for the protection of their houses. (53) Trade societies spent a great deal of their income on campaign literature. In the general election of 1895 the National Trade Defence League produced nearly 900,000 leaflets, 90,000 posters and 77,000 small cartoons, while the district offices added hundreds of thousands more pieces of propaganda. (54) The Trade Defence League, a co-ordinating

association for all the individual trade defence organisations throughout the country, entered the fray with gusto; the League claimed to have spent only £5,000 on this campaign but the prohibitionists were sure they had spent a great deal more. (55)

The Liberal Party entered the 1895 general election with a manifesto committed to Local Veto but this temperance ideology failed to convince the electorate of its merits and the Liberals lost to the Conservatives. Whatever strengths the Conservatives had in their approach to the 1895 general election, it did not win them the election; it was the Liberals who lost it and blame was quickly apportioned. (56) The Liberal *Westminster Gazette* had always resented the commitment to the Veto and in a poll of the 157 unsuccessful Liberal candidates on the causes of defeat, it recorded 134 who found the Veto harmful, 16 of no great harm and seven helpful. Although the candidates emphasised the damage done among the working class, they believed the Veto was unpopular with all classes. (57) The Temperance Movement had its first full inquest at the National Temperance Congress at Chester, only a few months after the ill-fated election. Many suggested that a 'more realistic approach to the temperance question be found other than that taken by the prohibitionists.' (58) The Advanced Temperance Party, had forced the Liberal Party into such a political predicament over its campaign for some form of prohibition that the prohibitionist vote had become 'too dear at the price' and for historians like Dingle, marked the end of the UKA's hegemony in the world of temperance. (59) Despite the Liberal/temperance setback at the 1895 general election, however, a Royal Commission was appointed in 1896:

To inquire into the operation and administration of the laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors, and to examine and report upon proposals that may be made for amending the aforesaid laws in the public interest. (60)

This commission provided the ideal, if unexpected, platform for the Temperance Movement to promote its cause but, as the temperance demands of different organisations were poles apart, could they present a unified front?



### The Peel Commission

Despite the fact that temperance had suffered a real blow to its campaign, new temperance initiatives, discussed before the 1895 election, were beginning to materialise. Pressure from the Church of England hierarchy and from the Westminster Licensing Reform Committee, composed chiefly of Liberal Unionists and led by Francis Fox, resulted in a meeting between the Bishop of London, the Liberal unionists and the government. At the meeting it was proposed that the government set up a commission or committee of enquiry. The demand for an enquiry was not directed by political opponents or by radical temperance organisations, but by men from the government back benches and the Church of England. Anxious not to be seen as unwilling and inflexible to positive change, and not wanting to be left out of plans that might jeopardise their profit margins, H. Cosmo Bonsor MP representing the National Trade Defence Association, canvassed support for the idea among the Trade. (61) It was, therefore, and somewhat ironically, the Salisbury government which revived and redirected the Temperance Movement by creating the Royal Commission on the Licensing Laws in April 1896. (62) Political cynics such as Lawson viewed it as nothing but a way of postponing the issue until the next general election, 'the only reason for the enquiry was a move to postpone any dealing with the liquor question.' (63) Edward Porrit, implied that Salisbury and Balfour might have agreed to an enquiry only in order to postpone passing a measure of temperance reform which could offend the Trade, thus ensuring the continued vigour of Trade support. (64)

The Commission's terms of reference were those proposed by the Westminster Committee:

To inquire into the operation and administration of the laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors, and to examine and report upon proposals that may be made for amending the aforesaid laws in the public interest,' with the addition of a trade amendment, due regard being had to the rights of the individual. (65)

Whilst this wording represented a compromise between the Temperance Movement and the licensed trade, it also provided a potential battle ground. In an effort to promote fairness and balance, the Commission consisted of eight members of the licensed trade, eight temperance reformers and eight neutral members; the government perhaps hoping that this mix would produce a report embodying compromise between extreme opinions.

The setting up of the Commission came at one of the most critical moments of temperance history. The Temperance Movement's most ardent supporters, the Liberal Party, had been resoundingly beaten in the 1895 general election and a post mortem on this defeat by Liberal MPs suggested that the call for Local Veto was responsible. The UKA leading spokesman and its long time president, Sir Wilfred Lawson, MP had been so confident of the attitude of the people that in a letter to *The Times* he said that he had no manner of doubt that vast numbers of the people are eager to obtain this power to abolish drink.' (66) After the election, Lawson conceded that the election result 'delivered a devastating blow to the Temperance Movement. Drink swept the country more thoroughly than it had done before.' (67) The electorates opposition to the Liberal Party's commitment to Local Veto was made clear at the 1895 election. It not only aroused hostility from the Trade but also, it would appear, among a large section of the working class who were most likely to suffer from the restrictions. It is also probable that increases in consumption were due to the celebrations of working class drinkers. By 1896 the Royal Commission had been appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Peel, a liberal Unionist and former speaker of the House of Commons. (68) The investigation was extensive and far reaching; it was appointed in the spring of 1896 and it was the summer of 1899 before its Final Report - in reality two distinct reports - was presented to Parliament. During that time the Commission held 134 sittings, questioned 259 witnesses and heard 74,451 answers. The quality and clarity of the evidence given by many of the witnesses who appeared before the Commission varied considerably but in the

final analysis amounted to a complex mass of factual and statistical data, information, arguments, grievances and outright propaganda. It would be impossible within the remit of this paper to investigate all that was said during this three year enquiry here I shall concentrate on those witnesses appearing on behalf of the Temperance Movement. The Peel Commission gave the Temperance Movement a public forum in which to plead its case and the question is, did they?

That there was disharmony within the Temperance Movement has been established and was public knowledge before the Commission was called. Moderate temperance supporters, like a founder member of the CETS, a Mr. Touchstone, thought that it was mischief to contemplate prohibition even as an experiment. As far as he was concerned. 'it would throw back the temperance question.... The Local Veto bill would not stop people from drinking, it would only bring the law into disrepute.' (69) Any talk of prohibition and there will be reaction to it. (70) E. Stafford Howard, vice chairman of the CETS suggested that the society looked upon the Trade 'as legitimate in the sense that there is no wrong in people drinking alcohol; in strict moderation, and in the sense that the Trade is sanctioned by law ...' (71) William Joyson-Hicks, a member of the CETS executive committee confirmed that his society 'was in no way a prohibition society. The CETS had two pledges, a moderate pledge and a total abstaining pledge.' (72)

Despite misgivings from the more radical temperance men such as Caine and Lawson, when they wrote in a letter to *The Times* that, 'whatever conclusions the Commission may reach, the UKA, as a body, would continue to press for Local Veto.' (73) Such statements by Caine are hardly surprising considering the track record of the Local Veto campaign. Local Veto was the theme tune sung by those witnesses who appeared before the Commission from hard line societies like the UKA who had prohibition as its sole objective. In his evidence Samuel Pope suggested that the UKA principle of 'veto' was primarily set out as 'a simple

measure whereby non-teetotalers could help to remove the disgrace and land-shame of drunkenness.' (74) He believed that 'the drink evil is one of the most consuming evils in the country; that no regulation of the drink traffic in any other way is or can be satisfactory.' (75) For Pope, Local Veto would only be an extension of the present system, which was already local and permissive, by associating the people with the licensing authority. (76) He agreed with Local Veto up to the point of total prohibition as it seemed the practical way of carrying it out, so that one locality did not have to wait on another. (77) Pope also concluded that there was a strong demand for some measure of popular control, especially among the working classes, as it was they who had experienced the most casualties from the excesses of drink. (78) Their commitment to popular control, however, was inconsistent. C. E. Sutcliff, a member of the executive committee of the British Temperance League gave evidence based on a test poll conducted in Burnley in 1887, when three questions concerning the Veto and the number of licenses in the town were asked. Sutcliff was of the firm opinion that 'magistrates could only grant licenses subject to the will of the people.' But when asked how often the 'will of the people' should be questioned Sutcliff was unable to respond. (79) The Commission again placed Sutcliff in a difficult position when he affirmed that a large majority of the Burnley ratepayers were, 'in principle' in favour of Local Veto. (80) But, when pushed, confirmed that he would only trust the ratepayers to suppress the sale of drink, not give them the power to increase it; even if that is what they wanted. (81) Sutcliff was in favour of absolute prohibition, and said that he would have laws making the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor illegal. (82)

James Whyte, Secretary of the UKA, was of the opinion that, 'the consumption of alcohol was on the increase and although open drunkenness is less, soaking drunkenness is more common.' (83) The present licensing system was, therefore, a failure, and that 'no locality should be saddled with the liquor traffic against its will.' (84) He was in favour of giving the

ratepayers in any district the power, by a majority, to totally prohibit the sale of liquor in their own neighbourhood. (85) When asked what would be the UKA's policy if it failed to get prohibition, Whyte replied that he would go on asking and would not rule out 'limited co-operation with other temperance organisations.' (86) This scope for compromise, however, proved short-lived. When questioned on Local Veto, Whyte confirmed that 'it was that which the UKA solely advocated.' (87) He believed that the people would have the power in two directions: 'the power of Prohibition and the power of getting back to their old position.' But like other temperance witnesses, he was not prepared to trust the people with the power of increase, only decrease. (88) Whyte also reaffirmed his radical but paradoxical opposition by stating that they (the UKA) wanted the suppression of the use of alcohol but did not think that prohibition was a practical proposition. (89) Whyte, turning on his main supporters, believed that the Liberal Party 'was just like the Tories' and, as far as he was concerned, 'the Liberal Party was subject to trying to get votes from anybody that can control votes and if they think the Trade is in this position, they are prepared to hedge about it as the Tories are.' (90) Whyte also maintained that there was evidence to suggest that there was a desire among working men, for local prohibition; illustrated, he argued, by the competition that exists to obtain houses in the prohibition areas in London, Liverpool and elsewhere. (91) Mr. Crossfield JP in his evidence said that there were large areas in which licensed houses were forbidden by the ground-landlord and the working class population were eager to get out of a neighbourhood where public houses were plentiful into one where they were scarce, (92)

In appointing a diversity of opinion among the twenty-four members of the Commission, the government had perhaps hoped for a report embodying a working compromise. But as *The Times* accurately predicted:

Commissions, like the Peel enquiry, constructed upon the representative principle frequently fail to arrive at any coherent or authoritative conclusion. The representatives never forget that they hold a brief for interested parties, consequently anything like a fairly homogenous collective opinion is impossible from the outset... the Commission as a whole is devoid of authority. (93)

Problems soon materialised as accusations abounded about Peel's high handed approach to his colleagues. Peel had in fact been converted to the outright annual conditions of licenses - to re-endowing licensing authorities, after a certain number of years' notice, with the power to refuse renewal without question. His conversion gave temperance reformers great encouragement, even though it split the Commission. (94) This split was brought about by Peel's draft report which he had circulated to Commission members. (95) The report called for substantial compulsory reduction in the number of licensed premises, with only limited compensation, and severe restrictions for those permitted to survive. Sir Algernon West, vice chairman of the Commission and a recognised neutral, vigorously protested at the way Peel abandoned procedural rules in an effort to get this report accepted. West approached Balfour for legal clarification and was informed that it was the Commission that was paramount and not its designated chairman. In Peel's defence, Whittaker (a temperance Commission member) suggested that it was misleading and unjustifiable to argue that the chairman had done anything to prevent a full discussion of his draft report. Whittaker also concluded that any objection West and his colleagues (eight trade commissioners and all the neutrals) may have had to the chairman's handling of Commission proceedings was not the real reason for their revolt; what they really objected to was the fact that Peel's proposals offended the licensing trade Commissioners. Writing in the *Nineteenth Century* in March 1900, Whittaker observed that the six neutral members who followed West rather than Peel, were supporters of Salisbury's government and that the licensing question had become inseparable from political ones. Whittaker concluded therefore that, 'the close connection which exists

between the Unionist Party and the liquor trade is notorious; they stand and fall together.'

(96)

Due to Peel's absence through illness, the Commission went into recess, during which time West drafted alternative proposals that reduced the number of licenses but proposed compensation for the licensees which, effectively split the Commission into two groups, each producing its own Report. Both Reports agreed that there should be a reduction in the numbers of public houses, but they totally disagreed over compensation. Peel's Minority Report was divided up into five major sections. The first three dealt respectively with England and Wales; with Scotland Ireland, and the fourth with clubs. The fifth section was directed at reduction, compensation and the Veto. Peel insisted on statutory reduction according to the proportion of the local population, and that it should begin after a period of notice of five or seven years, and that it should be unaccompanied by any form of compensation. (97) Peel proposed an end to the practice of grocers only needing a licence from the Inland Revenue suggesting that the so called grocers licenses should come under the full discretion of the licensing authorities. Peel recommended denying 'off' licences, for the sale of bottled wine and spirits, to any merchant who sold other goods on the same premises. (98) Those in opposition to Peel, accepted the former but not the latter proposal, and for many it was this that made Peel sign the Minority Report. West was 'so horrified' with these off licence proposals that he warned Herbert Gladstone that they would alienate the grocers and the moderates and 'end in as ruinous a result as Local Veto.' (99) With regard to the Veto, Peel recommended a postponement, believing that there was no evidence to suggest that public opinion in England, was strong enough to justify the introduction of Local Veto. What Peel proposed however was the right of Local Veto in Wales and Scotland, after five years and seven years respectively, and in England at some time in the indefinite future. Whilst agreeing to many of Peel's proposals, the five prohibitionist Commissioners

signed an addendum in which they confirmed their belief in the desirability of Local Veto, Sunday Closing for England and no money compensation for public houses. (100)

Those signing the Majority Report agreed that 'a gigantic evil remains to be remedied' and that one solution could be found in reducing the number of licensed houses. The Report had also concluded that the expectation of renewal had for a long series of years amounted to practical certainty in the absence of misconduct. The licensees had consequently acquired an actual and well recognised market value, and many, if not the majority, had purchased their licensed houses themselves without a license. When licensed property was compulsorily taken for public improvements, the licensee should receive the full market value of his license, goodwill and premises with an added ten per cent for compulsory purchase; the owner, even when his reversion was remote, also received, as in the case of any other business, the market value of his interest. The Majority Report acknowledged the probability of renewal as being incidentally recognised by public opinion, and came down in favour of the principle of compensation. Such compensation to be equivalent to the fair and intrinsic value of the license or goodwill, apart from the extreme inflation caused, in some cases, by excessive compensation. Awards of compensation to were be paid from monies raised by the trade itself. (98)

### Aftermath

With the next general election on the horizon, the two reports demanded some response from both political parties. The Conservatives were still unlikely to introduce any reforms that would affect their relationship with the Trade, and they could always say that it was too late for any measure to be introduced into the existing government programme. On the other hand, pressure mounted for some kind of action, not from militant temperance reformers, but from the moderate temperance supporters in the House of Lords, like the



bishop of Winchester. He introduced a resolution, urging the Government to give legislative effect to the relatively uncontroversial recommendations which both reports had in common. (102) Both Reports established a number of recommended licenses in proportion to the local population and required a reduction to this maximum, and both compelled the license holders who retained their licences to pay money for compensation.

Neither party could totally ignore the temperance issue, but it again fell to the Liberal Party, as the main political mainstay of the Temperance Movement, to offer some firm legislative commitment. The Liberal MP and leading prohibitionist, T. P. Whittaker, became the focus of an organised campaign to get such a commitment. In agreement with Herbert Gladstone, Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman, he accepted, on behalf of the Temperance Movement, the principle of compensation with the proviso that any compensation paid would not be drawn from government funding, but would be provided by the Trade. He also agreed to the postponement of the Local Veto in England. In return the Liberal leadership agreed to accept temperance reform along the general lines of the Majority Report. (103) The compromise in effect was that the Temperance Movement would not continue to press for demands over and above those advocated in the Majority Report, and the Liberal Party would give high priority to reforms going as far as the Report.

The declaration that the Liberal leadership was behind these legislative proposals came when Campbell-Bannerman suggested on 15 November 1899 that, with Peel's proposals the friends of temperance had a 'code of reforms which could rightly be adopted.' He concluded by stating that Peel's Report as a whole 'from the beginning to the end of it, I can see nothing which is in the least in conflict with Liberal principles and therefore which does not deserve Liberal support.' (104) Whittaker then produced a manifesto, signed by Liberal M Ps and leading clergymen, which accepted Campbell-Bannerman's proposals as a declaration of the Liberal Leadership's intent to enact the principles of the Peel Report. This manifesto was of

huge importance to both the Liberal Party and the Temperance Movement and its significance was not lost on those opposed to anything that might weaken either Party or Movement. Many feared a similar debacle to the acceptance of the Local Veto at the 1895 general election, and warned the Liberal Chief Whip, Herbert Gladstone that the adoption of the policies of Lord Peel's Report would once again alienate the voting public. (105) Fearful of not only losing public support, but also aware of the alarm bells that had begun to ring on behalf of the influential Liberal liquor traders, Gladstone continued to press Campbell-Bannerman that his speech had not constituted a party endorsement of the Peel Report. Campbell- Bannerman responded with a speech on the 19 December 1899 which suggested that the Peel Report should be taken, 'as a basis, without necessarily adhering to all the precise and detailed recommendations.' Gladstone believed that this would amount to the 'greatest good being done,' and that 'public sentiment in Scotland and Wales justified their advancement towards Local Veto at a faster pace than England.' (106)

Among the Temperance Movement, the omens for compromise were propitious, even among hard-liners who realised that the Peel Report offered a practical programme. They would also have realised that the eight neutral Commissioners or 'Christians at large' as they became known, had signed the Majority Report in the belief that only the recommendations accepted by the trade members could reach the statute book. (107) Also heavily ranged against extremists was the defeat of their main political supporters in Parliament. The Commissioners had accepted that most people still regarded alcoholic liquor as 'an ordinary article of diet, which is only harmful if taken in excess,' (108) and that the trade propagandists denunciation of the Veto, as an interference with personal liberty and the rights of property, had found public support. Despite these indications, the radicals could not bring themselves to abandon their trenches.

The moderates in the Temperance Movement and the leaders of the Liberal Party were still up against hard line vetoists, like Sir Wilfred Lawson, President of the UKA and a Liberal MP. Lawson led a section of advanced temperance supporters in protest against the line taken by Campbell-Bannerman and the manifesto signatories. (109). Whittaker and Caine, and most of the prohibitionist leaders saw only frustration ahead if they did not take advantage of the opportunity to secure the moderate allies that Peel's Report afforded but a special meeting at Newcastle of the General Committee of the North of England Temperance League, although welcoming some aspects of the Peel Report, resolutely opposed compensation, and recorded its determination to press for total Sunday closing and the Veto for the whole of the UK. (110) This meeting and others held in the provinces came out against the Whittaker compromise, whereas the London based societies continued to uphold them. To a large extent this was because the strongholds of radical temperance opinion traditionally lay in areas where Nonconformity was strong. There was also the feeling that the Temperance Movement throughout the country was being dictated to by a small clique of its self appointed representatives, isolated in their London offices and over-ready to accommodate the Liberal Party bosses (111) The Peel Report remained the basis of the Liberal programme for temperance reform but the Report lost the centre of the stage in temperance controversy as its most ardent partisans fell under the spell of another temperance scheme, disinterested management. (112)

What then can be said about the Temperance Movement at the end of the nineteenth century? From its inception it had certainly made its presence known and it had grown enormously. It had convinced many drinkers the value of sobriety and its political ambitions reached a peak in the 1895 general election. Local Veto failed to convince the electorate and both the Liberal Party and the Temperance Movement were checked in their respective ambitions. The Conservative government appointed a Royal Commission, offering the

Temperance Movement a monumental opportunity to plead its case which it noticeably failed to do. Temperance and the drink question continued to be an issue of considerable political concern in the late nineteenth century, as society continually sought answers to the moral perplexities that confronted it. Despite the many solutions that it offered in response to the drink question, the Movement seemed unable to come up with one that was unchallengeable. Moderate viewpoint became stronger but stamped on by reactionary hard liners. Divisions in the Movement prevented concentrated action and undermined effectiveness. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Temperance Movement had reached a position where it could effectively influence a political party to pursue a temperance agenda. Its prime objective was to successfully neutralise the liquor industry by moral suasion and the value of total abstinence or by effective legislation. It did persuade many to abstain but not enough, it was unsuccessful at comprehensive legislation and the Trade continued to prosper. Did these failures signal the demise of the Temperance Movement or was it still a force to be reckoned with?

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Introduction

The prime objective of the Temperance Movement was the abolition of the drink trade which it had set out to accomplish by moral suasion. Not satisfied with this approach, the more radical temperance reformers demanded prohibition but, as chapter one shows, the electorate in the general election of 1895 were not convinced by the Local Veto arguments and the political ally of the Temperance Movement, the Liberal Party, wanted to disassociate itself from the Veto completely. At the turn of the century therefore, the Temperance Movement was left with something of a dilemma. If the pursuit of prohibition was dead in the water and moral suasion seemingly unable to deliver the prime objective, was it still a force to be reckoned with?

This chapter will address this question, but it is worth considering where temperance reformers stood at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their focus was increasingly on the social ills of the time but they maintained the view that the working class, in particular, contributed to its own ills by its drinking habits. The Temperance Movement was a powerful force when it came to highlighting such social issues as poverty, but surveys conducted by Rowntree and Sherwell and later by Snowden, gave other reasons for the causation of poverty. Sherwell also concluded that even if bad housing conditions were the result of prior drinking habits, the Temperance Movement had still to face the fact that slums existed. (1) Added to this argument was a Board of Trade Survey in 1907 which concluded that working class drunkenness was no longer the sharp social question that it had been thirty years ago. The Report argued that the chief reasons for this transformation of habit were education, greater recreational facilities, improved sanitary conditions and in a few cases 'the influence of the Temperance Movement.' (2) The erosion of its poverty argument and a fall in the

levels in drunkenness and consumption, prompted many temperance reformers to reconsider their position. What Greenway calls temperance reductionists, many of them members of the CETS, were dissatisfied with the progress of the moral suasionists and at odds with the prohibitionists. They accepted the legitimacy of the trade in alcohol, but thought that it was dangerous and excessive and should be diminished. But even here there was division with some reductionists appealing for a reduction in the number of licenses, others wanting a reduction in hours, whilst for others it was local control. (3) On top of which was the issue of compensation. Nor, as we saw in the last chapter, had prohibitionists gone away.

One can see therefore that the pursuit of temperance ambitions at the beginning of the twentieth century was unclear. Demand for Local Veto had become muted and the moral suasionists had lost the force of many of their arguments which had opened up the temperance debate to embrace restrictive licensing of retail outlets, public control and ownership of the drink trade and increases in leisure activities. Ironically, this widening of the debate makes it possible to argue, suggests Weir that, 'pressure for temperance reform was stronger between 1900 and 1914 than it had been during the previous thirty years.' (4) Agreeing with this hypothesis are Williams and Brake who argued that, 'notwithstanding legislative failure, the temperance forces had never been stronger and, up to the First World War, remained a threat to the liquor trade.' (5) Following the defeat of the Liberal Party and faced with a triumphant Conservative Party and a powerful vested interest in the Trade, the Temperance Movement knew that it had to close ranks. It not only had to adopt policies that could be seen by both radical and moderate temperance supporters as acceptable; it also had to convince a somewhat sceptical Liberal Party that its future temperance proposals would not lose the Liberals a third general election. Could the Movement rise to the challenge? Was it a defeated demoralised and out of date organisation or did it still command enough support and energy to influence the continuing debate around drink?

## Temperance, Politics and the Trade

What then is to be made of the mood of temperance reformers as they entered the twentieth century? In the 1899-1900 Report of the Temperance Committee of the Methodist Conference there was a firm commitment to a major extension of its work which included the establishment of a home for inebriates and the formation of a connexional Band of Hope and Temperance Union. This was despite a falling membership and a decreasing availability of funds. (6) In the *Good Templars Watchword*, the official journal of the Grand Lodge of England, it was suggested that, 'experience and experiment has shown that individual and national sobriety can only be obtained by the complete outlawry of alcoholic drinks.' (7) Forever optimistic, the *Temperance Record* declared on the 6 December 1900 'that temperance reform is in the air.' The *Record* believed that, 'in the political, the social and the religious world there is an impression, amounting to a conviction, that something must be done,' and that, 'a volume of public opinion is in favour of temperance reform which no Parliament can long defy with impunity.' (8) Professor W. Carter suggested that 'in Liverpool the present position of the Temperance Movement is most encouraging.' Joseph Malins, Grand Chief Templar hoped that, 'the splendid progress made in 1902 would be repeated in 1903.' Charles Wakely, secretary of the UKA Band of Hope Union thought that 1903, 'could be of great significance for the Temperance Movement' suggesting that 'the Movement should encourage the wealthy and leisured classes to show a greater understanding of the Temperance Movement.' (9)

Others, however, added a note of caution. J. H. Lear Caton, Secretary of the Birmingham Temperance Society, suggested that there was a serious danger in the 'multiplicity of the organisation beyond its working strength.' He criticised new temperance organisations, believing that they were 'a drag upon the wheel of progress and an assistance to the enemy rather than his own side.' (10) There were constant calls for unity and the *Temperance*

*Record* suggested that, 'if temperance reform of all shades is to be achieved then it must rest on a solid basis otherwise it will not be unity but a conglomerate.' (11) Many introspective questions were being asked about the influence of the Temperance Movement. The *Record* believed that although there was an acceptance that much had been done there was a growing pessimism that the Temperance Movement had had its day. (12) The *Record* acknowledged the fact that temperance sentiment had, 'permeated society and greatly altered public opinion as to drinking' but, despite the enthusiasm by which it pursued its cause, it also believed that the Temperance Movement had only touched 'the fringes of the population leaving the great mass to a large extent untouched and uninfluenced.' (13) Many temperance reformers knew that the local temperance societies left a lot to be desired, but were equally scathing of the central temperance organisations and their journals. F. Sherlock, the editor of the *The Watchword* questioned the role of literature in temperance work, suggesting that:

It was an open secret that the gloomy editions of the temperance press are hated rivals, thirsting for each other's blood and on occasions sling ink at one another with even greater zest and vehemence than mark their pretty style when discussing that organised hypocrisy, which calls itself the Trade. (14)

Like other journals, the *Watchword* was a forum for the views of its readers and many letter writers questioned the purpose of the journal. They suggested that 'the paper is too dry,' 'there is nothing in it,' 'we have no time to read it,' 'it is far too dear and there are not enough pictures.' The *Watchword* defended its role as a temperance journal pointing out that its 'large displays of adverts; general items of lodge news; high class illustrations and helpful discussions made it well worth a penny.' It did however concede that it was not perfect. (15) No doubt temperance journals such as the *British Temperance Advocate*, the *Alliance News* and the *Watchword* would have been mainly read by temperance supporters but, in an effort to keep their readers informed of temperance news, the journals became dull and repetitive for readers and of not the slightest interest to those in society who regarded temperance

reformers with disdain. Letters to the *Temperance Record* showed that many were extremely apprehensive regarding the future of temperance. Archbishop Wilberforce suggested that, 'the outlook for 1903 was extremely gloomy.' He believed that, 'the masses are drinking much and we are slowly losing our commercial supremacy - the liquor traffic rules.' (16) Lady Biddulph was of the opinion that, 'its meetings have lost power; they are full of believers and do not touch the fringe of belief and ignorance outside them. (17) In less emotive language, Sydney and Beatrice Webb suggested that whilst the growth of the Temperance Movement since 1830 had been impressive and had had an effect on public opinion this had not been reflected in the total consumption of drink. (18) That there was pessimism within temperance ranks is also understandable as their flagship of Local Veto was resoundingly rejected by the electorate. For over half a century the Temperance Movement had been campaigning for the abolition of the drink industry and despite flashes of optimism the sense of frustration at the lack of progress was perhaps tangible

Despite a vigorous campaign the Liberal Party was emphatically beaten in the 1900 general election, prompting it and the Temperance Movement once again to reexamine their temperance strategy. Surprisingly the UKA had publicly welcomed the Minority Report of the Peel Commission. (19) It endorsed the idea of municipalization of the liquor trade together with 'disinterested management,' a concept developed by the Swedish town of Gothenberg. It had been thought that the UKA was a movement that demanded too much in the way of temperance legislation and so tried to modify its position. In October 1900, James Whyte, the secretary of the UKA said that, 'the Alliance does not believe that anything short of Local Veto will enable the people of this country to deal satisfactorily with the liquor traffic.' (20) But later, in a pamphlet published in 1901, the UKA concluded that 'the advantage of Local Veto is that it is not antagonistic to, or incompatible with, any system of licensing.' (21) A review by Noel Buxton and Walter Hoare in 1901 suggested:

that vetoists and advocates of public management have learned to despair of a direct victory for their cause and have seen that the wisest course is to join the 'practical reformers' in support of a scheme for improving the present licensing system. (22)

The debate over disinterested management continued throughout the early years of the century. The British Temperance League at its annual meeting in Huddersfield expressed its strong condemnation of all schemes for public management, whether put forward by municipalities or individuals and called upon temperance reformers everywhere to offer strenuous opposition to such proposals. In a further attempt to stem the tide of a more pragmatic approach to temperance reform, Whyte denounced those who advocated diluting the Veto. Whittaker had published a National Temperance Manifesto which advocated disinterested management as an alternative form of local control to the Veto and accepted the necessity of compensation, reasoning that the moment was right, 'to provide a rallying point for the great mass of reasonable temperance and earnest non-abstaining opinion to consolidate if disaster is to be avoided.' (23) Wright suggests, however, that by 1905, a large number of temperance organisations, including those with a wholly or strongly prohibitionist bias, had declared themselves against management in the public interest. Most of these societies belonged to the Advanced Temperance Party (ATP) and were attached to the Nonconformist Churches. The rift between the two opposing viewpoints widened and deepened with the formation of the Temperance Legislation League in 1905. Its aims were 'to organise and concentrate temperance opinion in the country on reasonable and practical lines emphasising the link with the Peel Report and disinterested management.' (24)

The attempt to formulate a more moderate position based on the conclusions of the Peel Report thus only exacerbated the divisions within the Movement, prompting further bouts of introspection. In September 1910 an article in the *British Temperance Advocate* asked: 'What is the next step forward'? Organisation or continued chaos'? (25) The secretary of the Birmingham Temperance Society, J.H. Lear-Caton again asked whether the Temperance



Movement had the finest organisation in the country. Caton suggested that there was such a bewildering number of temperance organisations that this was not an indication of strength, but one of weakness and that what was needed was 'not more organisations but more organisation.' He continued his diatribe by suggesting that the Temperance Movement is at present 'a mob' and that what was needed was a National Temperance Crusade that would produce, 'a system of organisation that would weld together all our stray forces.' From others in the Temperance Movement however there was still a great deal of optimism. Speaking at the British Temperance League's 78th annual conference, Professor Woodhead said that in every part of the country he had found, 'a band of earnest, conscientious, persevering, enthusiastic temperance workers.' He believed that they were, 'on the eve of a great advance in the temperance cause ... and the whole of the temperance societies in this country were stronger than they were twenty years ago.' (26) But the theme of disorganisation was back on the agenda, when at a Kent County Temperance Congress the secretary of the British Temperance League said:

Here we have reached the great failure of the Temperance Movement. We have never been one in organisation, but an incoherent mass of atoms without cohesion, except in some great national crisis, when, for a short time, we have worked together but only to fall asunder and become inert again as soon as the crisis has passed. (27)

The Temperance Movement was up against 'the Trade,' a group of powerful vested interests which sought to undermine the Movement at every opportunity although it did not have everything its own way. Temperance advocates constantly referred to the social ills caused by the Trade suggesting that it was responsible for the low army recruitment and physical degeneration hence putting the nation at risk. At the same time, the medical profession continued to add its voice by reaffirming the link between alcohol, infant mortality and national efficiency. George Sims in a series of newspaper articles entitled *The Cry of the Children* suggested that working-class mothers frequented pubs where they gave

their babies and toddlers alcohol, and exposed them to deadly respiratory diseases. His discoveries provoked a national campaign in which a committee of Liberal politicians, leading medical authorities, temperance officials and religious leaders eventually secured legislation excluding children under fourteen from licensed premises. (28) In the communications media of the early twentieth century, the Temperance Movement continually repeated the message about alcohol's pernicious effects on health, reproduction and longevity and emphasised the links of alcoholism with insanity, consumption and infant mortality. (29) Crapster suggests that there was a certain justification in the Trade's statement that the claims of the Temperance Movement were fraudulent. Although ostensibly concerned primarily with the welfare of the drinker, some seemed more concerned to destroy the drinks industry:

If the objective was to reform the drunkard and improve the habits of the people, the brewer and the allied trades would heartily cooperate with [the temperance reformers] but that is not their objective. There was a vendetta against the brewing trade seeking its total destruction. (30)

As a consequence of all these attacks the Trade's political influence was not constant between 1875-1914. Its power to act as a unified force was also in doubt as bitter economic rivalry between brewers and retailers added to a growing sectionalism. Tied house practices, clubs sponsored or assisted by brewers and direct delivery of beer, all generated retail rancour. Gutzke suggests that if the Brewer's Society had proposed guidelines for these activities, based on consensus, then the sectionalism would not have been as great. (31) Falling membership in the Trade's organisations and a deepening suspicion about Unionists' commitment to their cause further disunited the brewers and the retailers. Trade prestige was also under attack. Many thought that greed was the main motivation for the Trade's haste in buying most drink shops and when the licensed property market collapsed they were considered reckless. (32) The Trades' ability to act as a 'pressure group' has also been

brought into question by historians such as Fahey and Weir who stressed this disunity; its subsidiary role by 1900 in a 'mature' industrial economy, retail apathy and the larger incomes of the temperance societies. (33) It is clear that there was a shift in the industry's fortunes between 1900-1914 with the fall in beer consumption; mistaken investments in licensed properties friction between brewers and retailers and the extension of the tied house system; all contributing to disunity.

All the above would seem to indicate that the Temperance Movement was up against a demoralised and disorganised Trade yet for many purposes various trade groups acted as allies especially when it came to fighting for its own existence. During the Edwardian period three developments strengthened the Trade's armoury. The liquor industry had spent itself into a corner with its high investment in substantial numbers of houses in industrial areas; areas that were now declining inner city ones. High growth meant excessive competition and shrinking profits for the brewers. (34) The 1904 Licensing Act however (see below) gave the industry the ideal opportunity to unload bad investments. Fewer licenses were of benefit to the Trade as most of the custom was transferred to other houses belonging to the individual brewing companies. Fearful of more damaging legislation the Trade consolidated its three major brewing societies into one comprehensive national organisation the Brewer's Society which gave the industry greater influence. Auxiliary industries coalesced to form the Allied Brewer's Trade Association (ABTA), which enlarged the Trade's electoral power and supplied an independent agency for disseminating propaganda. (35)

In one of its counter arguments, the Trade continuously emphasized the freedom of the individual and were adept at quoting John Stuart Mill's comments on liberty. (36) A leading London publican warned that if Englishmen accepted the principle of interference in one case, other infringements of personal liberties would follow. (37) . The Trade was given a

further boost by the introduction of the limited liability company as many people became shareholders in the Trade. In 1907 one million pounds of preferred stock and bonds of brewing companies in the UK were held by approximately 100,000 people and institutions.

(38) The *Daily News* published an extensive survey of people holding securities, exclusive of bonds, either in their own names or as trustees. The figures showed that this was the case with 158 peers with nine of them actively engaged in the Trade as directors. Many other names appeared on the list including those of Privy Councilors. The House of Commons was also seen to be represented with 87 MPs holding shares in the liquor industry: 59 Conservatives, 9 Liberal Unionists, 12 Liberals and 7 Nationalists. (39)

Crapster asserts that there were two contributing factors responsible for the Trade's political influence. First there were the many Trade associations an industrial press and front organisations to mobilize public opinion. At a local level the public house became the focus of political activity. (40) In a different context politicians had long since realised that the party which could secure the public house could gather support the majority of votes, but the principle remained valid. (41) The diversity of the Trade's many commercial outlets became 'both a political strength and a political weakness' (42) but, because of the numbers involved, the Trade could use this to its political advantage. The Trade did not have everything its own way and the sectionalism was a constant invitation to the opposition to split the Trade front but the power and influence of Trade and Temperance Movement were not comparable.

A Conservative government was elected in 1900, and for those seeking temperance reform it was again seen as a disaster, cognisant as they were of Salisbury's attitude to the drink seller - protection rather than attack. Salisbury believed that it was 'the birthright of Britons to freely indulge in drink' and with a solid vote of at least 400 members in the House of Commons, talk of temperance would have been well down the agenda, if it was there at all.

(43) This is not to suggest that the Temperance Movement relinquished the right continually to seek firm and favourable legislation. It could still rely on Liberal support, all be it that that support had been drastically reduced by the general election result. Outside Parliament, forces in support of temperance initiated attacks on the government's lack of will to implement the Peel Report. Magistrates had come to recognize that there needed to be a decrease in the number of licenses and were helped in their endeavours by the *Sharp v Wakefield* case early in the 1890s when it was ruled by the House of Lords that the licensing justices had the discretionary authority to deny applications for renewal. (44) During 1903, the magistrates revoked 480 licences, causing the brewers' and licensing victualers' organizations to lobby the government vigorously for a legislative solution. (45) Balfour agreed that the magistrates were guilty of unjust confiscation of property to which neither government or Parliament could remain indifferent. (46) The Conservative government responded with the introduction of a licensing bill based on Peel's Majority Report which gave licensees of on-licences the right to claim compensation for the sale of their license other than for misconduct. Jennings suggests that on the whole, the brewers did quite well out of surrendering licences. It was mostly beer houses with poor accommodation, often older properties, doing a poor trade that were closed. The measure, in other words, worked to remove the less profitable outlets. (47)

As expected, the Temperance Movement abhorred such a bill and had their supporters in the House of Commons who said so. Lloyd George declared that it was raising up 'a barrier almost insuperable, a wall, an impregnable rampart, around the worst and most dangerous enemy that ever menaced this Empire.' (48) And in the House of Commons on the 4th of July, Lloyd George suggested that 'it (the licensing bill) was introduced purely and simply as a matter of bribery and corruption.' (49) The Temperance Movement did everything in its power to stop the bill from becoming law. From February the 22nd to the 24th of June there

were 6,659 petitions against the bill with 224,872 signatures. (50) The *Birmingham Evening Dispatch* reported that missionaries had been busy at street corners and in the open spaces of the suburbs for more than a fortnight. (51) In Manchester and Halifax large gatherings were reported of 10,000 and 12,000 to 15,000 respectively. The temperance press were typically scathing in their attack on the bill, with the *Advocate* proclaiming that :

This government liquor endowment and compensation bill will double the value of licensed property; cripple the powers of the magistrates; create enormous vested interests, where none exist, and block the path to temperance reform. (52)

Despite the protests the licensing bill was enacted and the 1904 Licensing Act established a statutory principle of public house closure in areas where on social grounds they were considered superfluous. (53) The legitimacy of the Trade was never in doubt by the legislatures of the Act, but the closing of many public house was seen as being conducive for social order. Licensing returns show that between 1906-1914, 5,881 fully-licensed houses and beer houses were shut down amounting to an overall reduction of nearly ten per cent in the number of on-licenses. (54) The Act meant that the trade was indebted to the Conservative Party, a fact not unnoticed by the *Licensed Trade News* when it declared in December 1905 that, 'the Trade cannot ... withdraw its allegiance to a party which has been just, fair and equitable in its attitude. Identity with the Unionist cause just now is compulsory.' Others echoed these views. Edward Johnston advised Finsbury licensed victualers and beer sellers that, 'they must support the Unionist Party to preserve the integrity of the Trade.' (55) With another general election looming, some in the Trade realised that to identify with the Unionists too strongly would antagonize the Liberal Party and could result in disastrous repercussions. Gutzke suggests that many ordinary brewers and publicans tried futilely to end this transparent alignment with Unionists at the 1906 general election, where Liberals, with their anti-compensation policy achieved a spectacular victory. (56)

## License Removal

It is understandable that the Liberal Party was somewhat nervous of any stronger relationship with the Temperance Movement believing that it was this association which had contributed to the Party losing the 1895, 1900 and 1904 general elections. But with the Trade and the Conservative Party joined at the hip, there was nowhere else for the Temperance Movement to go and they still had their ardent Liberal supporters. Lloyd George claimed that one-third of the permanent unemployment of the country was due to drink. He was also of the opinion that the 160,000 convictions for drunkenness went to prove that drink was 'a greater handicap to Britain's trade than all the tariffs in the world put together.' He was enough of a social reformer to recognise that, 'a nation suckled on alcohol is doomed and that temperance was an answer to it.' The Trade was also anathema to Lloyd George simply because it was one of the pillars of the Tory Party. (57)

The general election of 1906 gave the Temperance Movement a tremendous boost. The *Advocate* cheerfully reported that, 'never in the history of the Temperance Movement has such a phalanx of men so favourable to sound temperance reform been returned to Parliament.' (58) The *Advocate* also reported on promises given by Liberal members that an amendment to the 'Brewers' Endowment Act' would be enacted at the earliest opportunity. Crapster makes the point however that this new generation of Liberal leaders, although sympathetic towards temperance and desirous of drastically reducing the number of licenses, did not accept Local Veto pure and simple. They wanted to reduce the number of licenses in those areas where Local Veto could not be put into force, and they coupled this reduction with a time limit on existing licenses as a sop to those who held that immediate cancellation was confiscation. (59) Such reticence by many members of the Liberal Party was justified when considering the many political obstacles facing them. The emerging Labour Party recognised that many working-class voters looked upon temperance reformers as 'fussy

clerics and patronizing black-coats who insist upon saving a man from himself and his simple pleasures.' (60). Ben Tillet declared that 'for myself I would back Socialism and beer in preference to Nonconformist conscience and tea.' (61) There was also the main weapon in the Conservative arsenal to overcome; the liberty of the individual. The working man and his beer were synonymous to the Conservative's idea of 'Merrie England' and the right to hold property in freedom. (62)

Despite any reservations they may have had, the Liberals introduced a licensing bill in 1908. It was described as 'the greatest step forward in temperance ... during the life time of any man living.' (63) The purpose of the bill was to modify the 1904 Licensing Act by restricting compensation; accelerating and expanding licensing reductions; increasing licensing fees and permitting some Local Veto. A time limit of fourteen years would be imposed during which time the levels of compensation would be reduced. It was certainly a drastic bill and alarmed many investors. Naturally, the Trade, vehemently opposed such legislation, promising fierce and uncompromising opposition. The *Brewing Trade Review* condemned the licensing reduction scheme as iniquitous, pointing to surveys showing the loss of two-thirds of licensees in some areas of Manchester. (64) Many, like Winston Churchill, thought it 'a measure imposed on an industry by a teetotal riddled government.' (65) The president of the Licensed Victualers Society, Alfred Dunbridge, protested that, 'the measure was not about the promotion of temperance so much as the annihilation (sic) of the Trade.' (66)

That there was a determination to succeed from both sides is clear in the propaganda war that ensued. The bill was denounced as 'a first step in Socialism;' as 'a fanatical attack upon the birthright of the Englishman.' Brewers brought out placards with the pious legend, 'Thou Shall Not Steal.' (67) Petitions, deputations and mass meetings gave the Trade enormous publicity for its cause. Paid music hall entertainers poured scorn on temperance ideas, until



barracking from hostile temperance reformers forced them to retreat. Towns and cities were plastered with posters and leaflets and the Liberty Van toured rural areas collecting petitions and putting up posters in the countryside. Brewing workers were intimidated by threats of redundancy or lower wages if the bill was passed. The Trade's ancillary workers faced similar threats due to possible loss of orders from the brewing companies. Temperance meetings were disrupted with awkward questions against anti-drink resolutions or counter amendments. The Association also supported Unionist candidates, lent them speakers, canvassers and vehicles. It inundated voters with literature - 120,000 leaflets, 100,000 pamphlets on unemployment, 25,000 general posters and 700,000 cartoons; farmers received 35,000 pamphlets and maltsters 8,000 circulars. (68) The mobilization of shareholders as trade allies clearly influenced political perceptions. Unionists like Ackers-Douglas, former Conservative chief whip, cited the prospective damage inflicted on shareholders as justification for opposing the fourteen year time limit in the 1908 bill. Gutzke believes that the view so carefully fostered by the Trade, of a large group of shareholders with unsettled Liberal loyalties, beguiled Unionists. He also suggests that Trade appeals, in fact, probably caused few Liberal shareholders to 'defect.' (69) This is supported by the Licensed Trade News when it admitted in 1912 that 'financial identity with a brewer does not always weigh strongly enough with a man to induce him to change his political faith.' (70)

A test of Liberal and temperance loyalties came at the Peckham by-election. The Liberals had won the seat from the Unionists in the 1906 general election, but at the 1908 by-election it went the Unionists' way with a majority of 2500 votes; a victory for the opponents of the licensing bill. 'It was a by-election,' suggests Du Parq, 'which made even the Tories wince.' The *Morning Post* reported that, 'never has a more cynical and shameless appeal been made to the lower appetites of the electorate.' (71) Two days after the Peckham by-election, Lloyd George, addressing the UKA at the Queen's Hall accepted that in the first skirmish the

government had been badly beaten,' and appealed to the Christian Churches to be foremost in the fight without distinction. He was echoing the thoughts of the Bishop of Chichester, chairman of the CETS who had appealed for legislation to diminish temptation adding ... 'I do really long to see the Church of God doing its duty in this manner.' (72) Supporters of the bill also had to deal with a 'collection of the most potent, insidious and dangerous enemies of temperance reform; the editors of the London Press.' The *Advocate* declared that, 'they attack the merits of the licensing bill, deprecating its importance and working for the substitution of other measures in preference', (73) On the other hand, the Very Rev C. J. Ridgeway, Dean of Carlisle suggested that, 'Attacking the brewers, distillers and publicans was doing the temperance cause a disservice.' (74) But the Temperance Movement knew that, 'it was facing the fiercest political battle of modern times,' a statement which was echoed at many temperance meetings. Sir William Clegg thought the bill 'the most important social reform movement that we have had during the last fifty years.' (75)

The passage of the bill through the House of Commons was incredibly slow, hindered by one thousand tabled amendments. Liberal members were attacked but the third reading of the bill was carried by 350 votes to 113. (76) Getting the bill through the House of Commons was one thing; getting it through the House of Lords was another. The Temperance Movement expected there to be drastic amendments to the bill in its passage through the House of Lords but promised support from the Bench of Bishops, and the belief that some important Unionist peers did not wish to be identified too strongly with the licensed trade, led to the hope that the amendments would be negotiable. (77) With the huge majority in favour of the bill in the House of Commons, the House of Lords voted that the bill be given a second reading. On the day the second reading was to be taken, however, a private meeting of Unionist peers, called by the Marquess of Landsdowne, was held to consider the measures that needed to be taken towards the licensing bill. The outcome of that meeting, at which

over two hundred were present, was to destroy the bill. For the next three days the House of Lords conducted a meaningless debate on a bill whose fate had already been decided. It was rejected by 272 votes to 96. (78)

After this defeat the temperance press castigated those involved in the bill's defeat in the House of Lords. Most of the onslaught was directed at Lansdowne, who was accused of having a vested interest in the liquor traffic; a fact later confirmed by the BTA. Extensive research showed that Lansdowne was a trustee to shares in two major brewing companies and, therefore, 'tied to the Trade.' (79) The Budget of 1909 was seen as a means of redressing the defeat of the licensing bill. One temperance MP, Lief Jones, suggested that, 'whilst the licensing bill chastised the Trade with whips, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would chastise it with scorpions.' (80) Lloyd George had his sights on the landed wealth with his proposed increases in the tax yield from tobacco and drink, increases in death duties, and income tax, and certain land taxes. But again 'the peoples' Budget, with its many provisions, was rejected by the House of Lords, prompting a general election in 1910. The outcome of the 1910 February election resulted in the Liberals having to rely on Labour support. Despite this result the peers remained uncooperative on the Parliament Bill and regardless of royal intervention forced another election in December. The result was just the same and the Bill went up to the House of Lords. It decreed that the peers would have no power over money bills and could only veto other measures for a period of two years. The passing of the Parliament Act did not destroy the power of the aristocracy, but it did severely restrict it. (81)

The passing of favourable legislation had always proved difficult for the Temperance Movement. Its failure to get a Liberal government elected in 1895 at what was possibly the peak of its political influence was a serious drawback. It also failed at subsequent elections but was boosted in 1906 when a Liberal government was mandated to introduce a licensing bill. Although successful in the House of Commons, vested interests in the House of Lords

stopped the passage of the bill and prevented it from becoming law. What this meant for the Temperance Movement was an end to its political ambitions until the outbreak of war in 1914.

### The Temperance Movement and Religion.

While the Temperance Movement failed to secure any more favourable legislation and experienced waning political support, it was still grounded in a vast network of local groups coming under umbrella organisations of the two largest religious denominations, Methodism and the Church of England. Through the early twentieth century, however, grass roots support for local temperance groups fluctuated while the hold of organised religion was itself beginning to fail. This section will consider the nature of religious involvement in the Temperance Movement and its work at a more grass roots level which reprises a story of division and decline.

### Methodism

There is no doubt that the question of clerical support is complex and it is a fact that many ministers were alienated by teetotalism and hostile towards it, at least until the eighteen-seventies. (82) By the turn of the century however, the Temperance Movement, and in particular the UKA, relied heavily upon the strength and enthusiasm of Methodism. Radical opinions appearing in the *Methodist Recorder* called for all temperance reform to be shelved until prohibition or Local Veto was enacted. The *Recorder* was in favour of 'piecemeal legislation' such as Sunday closing in Monmouthshire, but was equally of the opinion that a section of the public would never be satisfied with anything less than total abstinence and prohibition from the state. (83) It was pessimistic however of the chances of achieving changes in the legislation. They accepted the fact that the Conservative

government was largely dependent at the polling booths on the goodwill of the Trade but was equally convinced that the Liberals had become acquiescent to Trade demands. From the *Recorder's* perspective, 'all conceivable types of government are, at this present moment, dominated by the Trade.' (84)

By 1900 signs were beginning to show that attendance at temperance meetings was falling. Brake suggests that in 1900 there was probably the first sign of decline in the Wesleyan Temperance Movement. The Wesleyan Temperance Conference heard that during 1900, 227 Bands of Hope and 159 adult temperance societies had lapsed, and the membership of the Band of Hope had declined by 14,139. (85) Many Methodists found that they could absent themselves from class with impunity, not least because their absence would scarcely be noticed. (86) Traditional forms of Methodism were fast losing their appeal; the young in particular showing their indifference. Such disinterest may have had something to do with the essential elements of the classical Methodist ethic of discipline and authority and many leisure pursuits were rejected by numerous Methodists. The associations of the football field were condemned as 'impure and degrading,' and 'dancing was as wicked as football and novel reading led to profligacy.' (87) That Methodism demanded a strict and disciplinarian approach to life can be found in many oral history accounts. A Mr F. Gaskin signed the pledge at an early age and was still attending Sunday School at the age of twenty-six. He remembered the strict discipline of the time and the constant learning of scriptures. A Mrs E. Parsons remembered her strict Methodist education and a headmaster who was well known for his condemnation of anything alcoholic. Alice Whitehead remembered her father's strict, almost fanatical, disciplinarian attitude towards the evils of drink. She regularly attended Chapel Sunday School and as her father played the organ he had his family sing hymns every night. (88) But rising prosperity and education left many Methodists dissatisfied with this

unyielding doctrine and demanded change; a change that would be enforced by a growing liberalism.

In an effort to redress the apparent decline, new ideas were constantly being aired by the Methodist Conference Temperance Committee. It wanted to see the establishment of scientific lectureships for its day schools and colleges, the formation of a Commercial Band of Hope and Temperance Union, and the appointment of a Police Court Mission. An ingenious if dubious solution to the falling membership numbers was proposed by W.G. Triggs, the District Secretary of the Bedford and Northampton Circuit. He reported to the 1899-1900 Conference that his Circuit had 168 Band of Hope Societies with 12,437 members, and 52 adult societies with 2,420 members. Triggs believed however that these figures contained inaccuracies in so far as they recorded details of actually existing societies, but did not reveal the number of pledged abstainers. He went on to suggest that by extrapolation from other societies, an additional 1,400 abstainers could be safely added. Triggs was also of the opinion that representation of the Band of Hope and adult societies was absent in many villages, and such places would, therefore, contain within them many hidden abstainers and temperance believers which could therefore swell temperance ranks.

(89) A. H. Rogers, District Secretary of the Birmingham and Shrewsbury Circuit, was also of the opinion that the method of recording the number of members was imperfect. He believed that 'although the completion of the returns were approximately correct, they were not only useless for the purpose of comparison but absolutely misleading.' (90) Other delegates, representing the districts of Cornwall, Bristol and Bath, and Bolton reported that it was difficult to obtain anything like a full return at all. (91) Many suggestions were made to the Conference on how the situation might be improved, including the merits of some form of effective organisation that could keep tabs on those trained by the Band of Hope. The hope

here was that they could be kept in touch with temperance teaching and in some sort of membership with temperance organisations. (92)

There were attempts to understand why there had been a steady decrease in the membership of the Band of Hope. It was believed that day schools were claiming more of the children's interest and homework made attendance at evening meetings difficult. The growth in alternative entertainment provided stern competition and the fact that industry and commerce demanded more from its workers meant that the Band of Hope found it difficult to recruit teachers for early evening meetings. In 1911 there was a Great Forward Movement which attempted to increase the numbers of the Band of Hope movement by a million. Every society taking part was to have a register of members and each society whose register showed an increase of fifty per cent in June 1912 would receive a national diploma. Writing in the *The Pioneer*, its editor, the Rev H. Carter, felt that a new temperance society was needed in the Wesleyan Church. He thought that the Bands of Hope had done fine work in the past and the increasing sobriety of the nation was partly due to their educational efforts, but that they could only keep boys and girls as abstainers until they were thirteen or fourteen. When they left school and began work they failed to attend Band of Hope meetings and, in many instances, drifted into the drinking habit. (93) Carter's solution to this problem lay in the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist League of Abstainers which he believed would give a more accurate forecast of the true numbers of abstainers. The League, formed in November 1912, had two sections; the Young Abstainers League (14-21 years) and the Adult Abstainers League (21 years and over). (94)

Meanwhile brewers and retailers faced considerable economic difficulties from 1900 onwards. In that year, total beer consumption, which had risen almost forty per cent in the previous two decades suddenly slumped, declining twelve per cent in the next decade before somewhat recovering. Historians disagree as to the reasons for this change, some suggesting

falling living standards, while others suggest shifts in consumer purchasing. (95) Whatever the reasons the 1904-1905 Report of the Wesleyan Temperance Committee, 'fully accepted that there was a great change in the people with respect to the use of intoxicating liquors.' but it only proved that 'the teaching of the Temperance Movement was becoming more acceptable.' (96) Such was the feeling by some that the 'drinks war' had been won that Conference had left the Temperance Committee members with the distinct impression that temperance was to be given a lower status within the Methodist movement. The Committee naturally felt that such a move would not only be highly mischievous to the temperance cause, but also to the general interests of Methodism. (97) They would not have been helped by the annual reports from the districts. From Kent it was reported that the fall in Band of Hope and temperance membership in some three or four circuits had been dramatic, and the numbers for East Anglia also showed a considerable decrease. (98)

The Wesleyan Temperance Society did favour certain aspects of drink legislation and was particularly enthusiastic about the 1908 Licensing Bill. They sent to the House of Lords nearly 2,000 separate petitions from circuit quarterly meetings; all in favour of the bill. The architect of the House of Lords rebellion, Lord Landsdowne, received a great deal of correspondence condemning his involvement and acquiescent attitude towards the drinks industry. The president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference appealed to Landsdowne 'not to reject the bill on its second reading' pointing out that a petition from nearly one million Methodist followers could not be ignored. There was an attempt by the Methodist Temperance Conference to keep the issue nonpolitical but warned Landsdowne that rejection of the bill 'would not be either forgiven or forgotten by the Wesleyan Methodist Church.' (99) Such pleadings, however, fell on deaf ears.

Reports from local societies give contradictory messages. There were societies whose financial situation was unsatisfactory due in part to their propaganda efforts and there was a



continual plea for members to show greater efforts. (100) Two years later the same society reported that the 'strength of the movement had never been stronger.' (101) The Carr Road Wesleyan Temperance and Band of Hope Society, Nelson reported that enthusiasm was still high and delegates were being sent to many temperance rallies. There was also sufficient funds available for expenditure on propaganda literature and contributions to the UKA. (102) In some instances, the local societies were heavily involved in seeking changes to the legislation. The Colne Temperance Society and Band of Hope at their 1907 Annual Meeting endorsed the Prime Minister's assurance that a 'comprehensive measure of temperance would be introduced during the forthcoming session.' (103) There was a feeling of high expectation from the Temperance Movement generally that the proposed Licensing Bill would reach the Statute Book. The 1908 Annual Meeting of the Colne branch suggested that 'temperance sentiment is spreading amongst all classes in the nation ... and there will be great disappointment in the ranks of temperance reformers if the bill is not successful.' (104)

Many local politicians felt threatened by the temperance lobby and canvassed support from the local societies. Societies with no firm commitment to a particular MP or party, canvassed the feeling of prospective parliamentary candidates. A joint meeting of the delegates from the Band of Hope union in the Clitheroe division was held in Nelson, and the candidates from both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party were asked if they supported a Licensing Bill, Local Veto and their opinion on the municipalization of the drink traffic. The Conservative Candidate (J. Blaney) proved unresponsive and unable to support a licensing bill like the 1908 one, the Labour candidate (Mr. Smith) was in favour of anything that would forward temperance reform. A committee meeting of the Colne branch pledged its support of the Labour candidate and at the same time urged that the replies of both candidates should be published. (105)

The need to sustain its relationship with the Temperance Movement was never in doubt for many Methodists. Despite the optimistic calculations of Triggs, there was also an acceptance that Methodism was seemingly failing to attract and keep its supporters. Some Methodists believed that it was due to the rigidity of Methodist teaching and its condemnation of many leisure pursuits, particularly those enjoyed by the young. Giving credence to this theory were the reports from the local Methodist temperance societies, which continued to show dramatic falls in membership numbers. With the falls in alcoholic consumption many within the Wesleyan Temperance Movement also became complacent, believing that the 'drinks war' had been won.

#### The Church of England Temperance Society.

Despite the close association between temperance and Methodism, the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS) was easily the largest temperance organisation other than the Bands of Hope. The foundations of the CETS were laid in 1835 when individual clergymen began to form total abstinence societies. In 1862 organised efforts were made to make these societies officially connected with, or part of the parochial work of the Church of England and in 1873 the Church of England and Ireland Temperance Reformation Society and the Manchester, Chester, and Ripon Diocesan Society were amalgamated, and the name altered to that of the CETS. It generally stood aloof from electoral contests, but it did have a legislative programme and had the advantage of influence in the Conservative Party. (106) The CETS had the ear and voice of many well-established figures, both in and out of Parliament who would not have associated with other more hard-line sections of the Temperance Movement. The Bishops would plead the temperance cause in the House of Lords which provided excellent publicity for the Temperance Movement. It was pressure

from the Church of England hierarchy and government back bench MPs who persuaded the government to set up the Peel Commission in 1896. (107)

The growth rate of the CETS was significant and by 1899 it had become one of the largest temperance societies in the UK claiming some 7,000 branches and 200,000 members. (108) But despite its size, or because of it, the CETS did not have the same influence as other more radical societies such as those subscribing to the objectives of the ATP. Because it was a church controlled organisation, its lines of authority were closely tied to that of the church. No branches could be formed without the permission of the incumbent, who was, whenever possible, the president of the branch. Total control was exerted by the branch president and no direct action could be taken without going through regular church channels. (109)

The principal aims of the CETS were the promotion of the habits of temperance, the reformation of the intemperate and the removal of the causes which led to intemperance. Such aims, the Society proclaimed, would be achieved by pursuing a moral, educational and social set of objectives which would also include a realistic programme of legislative reform. The CETS favoured the reduction of the number of licensed premises, with money compensation; the closing of public houses on Sundays, greater powers to the magistrates but as an organisation scorned the Veto. (110) Though its members were not required to be teetotalers, and the majority were not, the abstaining minority dominated the Society but such opinions put it at odds with many mainstream temperance societies who had banded together to form the Advanced Temperance Party. Attacks were made upon it by those like C. Wright of Birmingham who suggested in the *Temperance Record* that the 'degrading sins of intemperance' were being disregarded by 'the general body of wealthy members of the Church of England.' And the *Temperance Chronicle* suggested that many clergymen refused to have anything to do with temperance 'as they could often be seen at social functions drinking their beer and wine.' (111) Evidence to support this can be seen in the comments

parish if he chose to do so. Equally, if a minority of parishioners were only lukewarm towards temperance and the vicar was an enthusiastic temperance man, he could not carry on all the local duties by himself and the branch would cease to function. (118) Further problems peculiar to the CETS were the clashes between clerical and lay members of the Society. Officially the CETS was a joint venture of the laity and the clergy, but the latter tended to dominate the ruling committees, both in London and the provinces. Although the usual relationship between the two groups was an harmonious one, there were times and places where there was serious friction between the two. (119)

Writing in the *British Temperance Advocate*, W. N. Edwards thought that the Church was doing very little towards the Temperance Movement. He believed that if the Church remained silent on those moral issues embraced by the Temperance Movement then 'we can expect very little from Parliament or from men of the world.' (120) J.H.Lear-Caton, Secretary of the Birmingham Temperance Society, noted that the Temperance Movement, in its relations to the Church, had passed through various stages of evolution producing 'instances of precocious development, beyond the general attainment of the time.' He suggested that the Christian Church began its relationship with temperance with an 'attitude of open hostility,' which was followed by 'passive antagonism and indifference,' and was now at the stage of 'gracious toleration.' (121)

At a local level, societies like the Walton-le-Dale CETS, formed in 1884, followed the general rules and incorporated the two sections of total abstainers and non-abstainers but seemed uncertain what exactly it should do. At this level it was not so much a question of divisions but more a question of numbers and the pursuit of temperance. From 1900 the Walton-le-Dale Society reported attendance at its meetings as low as 22 and as high as 350. Many of the local societies seemed to be more interested in the provision of entertainment than anything temperate. At a meeting of the St. Andrews Temperance Society, Ashton-on

Ribble, there was only one item on the agenda and that was to discuss forthcoming artists and the provision of Lantern Lectures. The CETS union in Preston had declared that attendances at branch meetings were causing great concern and many were questioning what a CETS branch ought to do. At a meeting on 7 December 1908 the St. Andrews Society thought that the parochial branches of the CETS could best help the temperance cause by supporting the Bands of Hope as much as possible and the Police Court Missions. This was the last recorded meeting in the minute book and is typical evidence of the decline of the CETS at a local level. (122) An ardent temperance reformer, A. J. Crespi, believed that this decline was in part due to cold and damp venues, but was also convinced that a proportion of the blame could be laid at the door of 'the clergy making speeches that are false from the first word to the last.' Crespi was convinced that 'Christian workers and so forth ...do our cause great harm.' (123)

This section has examined the relationship between the two major religious groups in British society and the Temperance Movement. As drink was seen as a demonstrable evil the forces of Methodism and the Established Church became linked to the temperance cause but detrimentally followed different lines of reasoning. The strictness of the Methodist regime proved its undoing as changing secular attitudes accompanied huge falls in membership numbers. The CETS could rightly claim to have the largest membership in England but it suffered from a declining membership. The CETS rules also hindered temperance progress as its rules allowed for the inclusion of non-abstainers. This created huge divisions within the Temperance Movement which added to the natural disharmony between the Established Church and Methodism.

## Conclusions.

This chapter began with the question, was the Temperance Movement still a force to reckoned with? From the beginning the Temperance Movement had relied upon religion, not only because it provided a strong moral platform, but also because Methodists and Anglicans had ready made organisations that were ideally placed to promote temperance reform. But because of the schisms that existed between the two doctrines it exposed the Temperance Movement to similar divisions; divisions that were to prove highly detrimental to the Temperance Movement's aims and objectives. There is no doubt that the bond between religion and temperance was strong, so when the forces of Methodism and the Established Church began to falter, similar results were produced within the Temperance Movement. There are many reasons why both church organisations declined and despite some optimistic but conflicting views, the decline strongly affected the Temperance Movement. If the strength of a pressure group is to be measured by the quantity and quality of its supporters, then the years between 1900-1914 witnessed a Temperance Movement disillusioned by internal arguments and weakened by a falling membership.

Were the failures of the Temperance Movement the result of a weakened and demoralised membership, or was the Trade just more powerful? Gutzke suggests that historians have misjudged the effectiveness of the Trade as a pressure group. It can be acknowledged that the Trade was weakened between 1900-1914 and there was disunity. That there was conflict between retailers and brewers is clear. But the Trade was more than a match for the Temperance Movement, particularly when it came to propaganda stressing, as it did, individual liberty. This argument was strengthened by the introduction of the limited liability company, allowing many to become shareholders in the Trade's many companies. That the Trade became a vested interest is also true and politicians had long realised that the party that could secure the public house could secure a large percentage of male voters. The failure of

the Temperance Movement to achieve any major results in this period may be partly attributable to the weakness in its arguments, but it was also due to the Trade's actions against it.

From the political perspective the Temperance Movement never really recovered from the defeat of the Liberal Party at the 1895 and 1900 general elections, and despite the Liberals' winning the 1906 election still failed to get any of its legislation through. That the Temperance Movement succeeded in retaining the support of at least one political Party does suggest that it was still a political force to be reckoned with. This said, the Temperance Movement was not successful in achieving major changes to the legislation. The Liberals approach to the 1900 general election did not have the same temperance zeal to it as did the 1895 election, but in the 1906 general election there was a clear intent by the Liberals to introduce a licensing bill. Although the bill had a successful passage in the House of Commons, it failed in the House of Lords. Despite ardent support from Lloyd George, the government gave no sign of reintroducing their temperance bill, and to the many letters, deputation's and memorials, all that was forthcoming was abundant declarations of sympathy, but no promise of temperance legislation. (124)

Through the Edwardian period, the Temperance Movement remained an active, campaigning organisation with considerable popular support. Although the Trade was still highly influential, many within the Movement were hopeful and optimistic. The clear sighted however, recognised that with declining numbers, a lack of organisational cohesion and continual legislative failures, the Temperance Movement did not have the same clarity of purpose.

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Introduction

The retail sale of intoxicating liquor for consumption on the premises has been subject to statutory control in England since the year 1495 and under a system of licensing since 1551. (1) That there had to be some form of Parliamentary control of such products was generally accepted, but despite restrictions such as limited hours of sale, the Trade operated freely and was so adept at using this freedom principle in its propaganda that the selling and buying of alcoholic liquors became an important element in national life and a political minefield. On the other hand, mindful of the problems that continued to plague English society through the 'evils of drink' the Temperance Movement continued its campaign from both political and moral platforms. Turner suggests that both the temperance question and the fortunes of the brewing industry were still in flux on the eve of the First World War. (2) The Temperance Movement, however, was stagnant and embarrassed. It had not been persuasive in attempting to get total abstinence and its prohibition [Local Veto] endeavours were singularly uninspiring. Membership levels continued to fall and divisions within the Movement continued to impede progress.

Despite the abundance of legislation on social welfare in the Edwardian period *The Advocate* noted that there was no sign that the government's Temperance Bill was likely to be reintroduced. (3) Temperance related speeches made by the likes of Lloyd George were constantly referred to and the political fortunes of the Temperance Movement remained linked to those of the Liberal Party, but still there was little likelihood of action. In the second general election of 1910 the Liberal Party had lost its parliamentary lead, and relied on the Irish Nationalists for its majority. Unable to get its main political demand of Local Veto on to the statute book and realising that its membership was decreasing, the

Temperance Movement needed a fresh impetus that would focus both government and society back on to a temperance agenda. The unfortunate answer to the Temperance Movement's fortunes came with the outbreak of the First World War.

The issue of wartime control has been investigated by historians, as has the American experiment with Prohibition and the growth of leisure in the inter war period. All, however are central aspects of this study and must be considered. Large portions of this chapter, therefore, are necessarily of the nature of a review. Within this, however, the response of the Temperance Movement to the developments will be examined, particularly the important changes in temperance thinking formulated in the 1920s.

### Regulation

In the political decision making process the phrase 'in the national interest' has been a get out for politicians for decades but with the outbreak of war its use was meaningful. Drink was seen as being against the national interest and Lloyd George's speeches repeatedly condemned drink as being a continual threat to the war effort. (4) Despite some contrary indications he also believed that industrial production levels, particularly munitions and shipbuilding were threatened by worker absenteeism caused by excessive drinking. Lloyd George toyed with the possibility of nationalisation but settled for control, apparently a temperance measure but which in fact sidelined the Temperance Movement.

War was declared on the 4 August 1914 and the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) was introduced on the 12 August 1914, followed by the Intoxicating Liquor (Temporary Control Act) which came in on the 31 August 1914. Control of the liquor industry was seen as essential to the prosecution of the war and the British government pondered on the most effective solution. In 1915 and again in 1917 the government almost decided to buy out the whole of the licensed liquor trade in the UK. In 1915 state purchase was to have helped to



reduce absenteeism, and thus increase munitions production. In 1917 it was to have conserved food stuffs and saved shipping from the submarine crisis. (5) Negotiations for the purchase of the Trade took place in April 1915 and lasted three weeks but eventually broke down. Central to the breakdown of the talks was the estimated costs involved of £225 million. This huge cost quickly diminished any fervour that nationalisation supporters may have had. Asquith dubbed nationalisation the 'great purchase folly.' Lloyd George was also aware that the Temperance Movement was up in arms against the abhorrent suggestion that 'the state should sully its soul by becoming the manufacturer and distributor of alcoholic poison.' (6) Lloyd George had considered prohibition and the closure of distilleries but the consequential loss of industrial alcohol for munitions purposes persuaded him otherwise. He then moved to a policy that did not include outright State purchase of the drinks trade, favouring State purchase and management of the liquor traffic on a small scale in designated locations and higher taxation on all alcoholic liquors. (7)

Collapse of the purchase policy in 1915 led to an extension of the Intoxicating Liquor (Temporary Control Act) with the enactment of the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic Act) on the 14 May 1915. The pursuit of the national interest was the principal reason for all this legislation as it was deemed necessary to reduce the danger of members of the forces and munitions workers soaking themselves in alcoholic drink and thereby lessening the efficiency of the war machine. (8) The Board decided that immediate action was needed in at least ten areas of the UK where there was a concentration of industrial and armed force personnel. The restriction of the hours of sale and the elimination of treating were the first actions. This was later followed by the establishment of canteens and also by the direct control of drinking places. Primary emphasis was given to regulating the liquor supplied to the armed forces. Attention was then focused on the areas surrounding the munitions centres. High wages and the influx of migrant workers had served to push up the rate of drunkenness

in these areas; one of the worst places was Carlisle, where it was alleged, 'almost every alley was littered with prostrate drunken men.' (9) Taken further, contemporary observers noted that shortfalls in the supply of munitions to the Army, and setbacks to the shipbuilding and repair programmes, were due to worker absenteeism caused by excessive drinking.

In his memoirs of the war, Lloyd George was convinced that one of the most serious obstacles in the way of increasing industrial production was the heavy drinking in those areas identified by the Board. Such thoughts were given credence by the amount of alcohol consumed and a philosophy that ordained many to 'eat and drink for tomorrow our comrades may die.' (10) At the same time earnings were increasing with the corollary that drunkenness rose, particularly in those industrial conurbations devoted to the manufacture of munitions. The Employer's Federation had suggested to Lloyd George that drunkenness was the main reason for the consistent absenteeism and low levels of production. A government white paper, published on 1 May 1915 confirmed the view that drinking habits in certain districts, chiefly Northern Shipyards presented an undeniable problem. The correlation between delayed output and drink was never precisely established, but the assumption of cause and effect was sufficient for subjective criticism. Labour members of Parliament accepted that excessive drinking should be condemned, but that other causes of lost time and absenteeism should be considered. Later investigations by Dr. H. M. Vernon on behalf of the Ministry of Munitions showed fairly conclusively that persistently long hours and the loss of rest periods were the major cause of absenteeism and inefficient work. (11) Turner believed that the evidence suggested that 'there is little to convince a disinterested observer that drinking had a serious effect on munitions production or shipping.' (12) Lloyd George's papers and the cabinet papers of the period before 4 March 1915 do not indicate the drink was a cause of lost production. (13) Industrial relations in engineering, shipbuilding and merchant shipping were historically bad. It is difficult therefore to take seriously a complaint from the

shipbuilders Cammel Lairds, 'that drink is more responsible than anything else for a certain truculence in some... which leads to bad work and stoppages.' (14) Whatever retrospective judgments may have been reached on the true nature of the drink problem during the war, there was the contemporary perception that alcohol was hindering its prosecution.

The powers of the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic) were wide and varied. By far its most powerful armament was its authority to close any licensed premises or club and to regulate hours. They could do anything they pleased within the confines of the Act, and could call upon the police to implement their orders and enforce regulations. The Board did not rush headlong into action preferring gradually to introduce restrictions. Despite such wary action by the Board it did not prevent widespread resentment. Local club and pub meetings proclaimed that they were unnecessary: drunkenness was in long term decline anyway and consumption had been reduced by enlistment and by the fact that people were working day and night. (15) Jennings suggests that this resentment reflected the fact that the restrictions outlawed traditional practices regarded by pub goers, at least, as perfectly acceptable; treating - buying drinks for people either singly or in rounds - was an indispensable part of pub culture. Night workers could no longer have a drink on their way home from work. The Board's appointment and subsequent actions did therefore arouse some discontent, but the discretion and circumspection with which it went about its tasks was a powerful example of social engineering. Among the powers conferred on the Control Board were those of purchasing and carrying on licensed premises and businesses which meant, in effect, State purchase. The efficiency of the war machine was dependent on a constant supply of munitions and any threat to these production levels caused by excessive alcoholic intake was unacceptable to the Board. Attention focused on Carlisle and the Scottish district of Gretna where a huge munitions factory was constructed. The Gretna Estate witnessed an influx of some 10,000 to 15,000 hard drinking navvies, hired to build a new munitions factory. (16)

At the same time, State purchase was being considered in the Cromarty Firth area where drunkenness was rife amongst the increasing numbers of navy personnel. The Board also purchased public houses near a munitions factory at Enfield Lock in London.

Effectively in charge of the means of production and distribution of the liquor industry in the Carlisle area, the Board's first policy was to attempt to reduce the levels of drunkenness within its area. Undesirable and excessive numbers of public houses were high on the Board's hit list but, not involving itself in total prohibition, the Board invested in new public houses. This new style of public house offered a more congenial atmosphere providing meals and minor refreshments and the opportunity for rational recreation other than the consumption of alcoholic beverages. As an extension of this new thinking the Board appointed managers rather than tenants. This experiment in 'disinterested management' was made possible by the Board rewarding its staff through anything but the sale of intoxicants. At the end of 1918, out of 221 licensed premises in the Carlisle area owned by the Board and engaged in trade, 164 had been placed under management, and 57 were still in the hands of tied tenants. (17) Briefly put, disinterested management meant a scheme for carrying on the trade of alcoholic beverages, not for profit but for the 'public good,' but it was not the panacea that many had hoped for. In the Dumfries and Galloway district of Annan, the conditions under disinterested management so alarmed the bench that they issued stern warnings to the managers that 'no excessive consumption of liquor would take place on their premises.' (18) Such warnings were possibly due to the way the new establishment at Annan was constructed and operated. The building was specifically intended for the use of navvies who resorted to it in large numbers. (19) Other experiences of the disinterested management theory were not entirely successful. Many public houses in the restricted districts did provide food, but after a prolonged trial found that such provision failed to meet any demand. (20) In the Board, however, State control had come to be regarded with more and more favour as

being the policy which offered the most rapidly effective and best permanent solution of the 'drink problem.' (21) Full control of the drink traffic for the period of the war was considered by the Board as a forerunner to purchase at a later date.

Lloyd George too had not entirely abandoned the idea of nationalisation and in 1917 the second phase of state purchase was prompted not by excessive drinking, but by the fear that shortage of food would force the government to restrict the output of beer. (22) A public campaign was initiated and in May 1917 committees were set up to work out financial details. A two-clause bill to provide funds was approved and the decision made to assume control immediately the bill was passed. Details of the scheme were, however, mysteriously played down by Lloyd George who presented an alternative plan, to increase beer output without taking control, and argued that the parliamentary situation was wrong for large schemes. (23) The following year at a Brewer's Society meeting, its chairman told a general committee that he 'regarded State Purchase as dead.' (24) Though it may have been dead in the eyes of the brewers, the Control Board remained convinced on the merits of state involvement. In its 1920 report the Board stated categorically that by extinguishing private interests in the sale of liquor and establishing a strict system of control and inspection of public houses, it had been possible to reduce excessive drinking to a very marked degree. Restrictions imposed by the Board's orders were seen as being acts whose applications would have been impossible under conditions of private management. (25) Reports from the Carlisle district general manager showed that the transfer from private to public ownership had been successful. (26) This belief was supported by the Chief Constable of Carlisle and Labour Party activists who, together with trade union colleagues, extolled the virtues of the Carlisle experiment. From the evidence provided to them and their choice on what they wanted to hear, the politicians made out a good case for control of the liquor industry but remained unconvinced though not entirely dismissive about outright state purchase. It

remained a strand of thinking in the drink question and resurfaced at intervals through the inter-war period.

Not wishing to be left out of the debate altogether the Temperance Movement saw an opportunity for quickening their usual activities into an intensive campaign which took two forms, propaganda for individual abstinence and political pressure in favour of drastic legislation prompting renewed concern in the Trade. Predictably, the UKA, spying a foothold for prohibition, declared that the time had clearly come for wartime prohibition to be introduced as a 'non-controversial' measure. (27) The National Trade Defence Association (NTDA) thought this political opportunism and that it was a gross interference with the rights of the public. (28) There were those in the Temperance Movement who were clearly in favour of a moderate approach to the dilemmas attributed to the misuse of alcohol, but used the advent of war to press for demands that they would not normally have considered. Legislative proposals for a Control Board were seen as too mild. In the early months of the war restrictions on personal liberty were sanctioned and without protest by the public, as most war measures were, and the Temperance Movement argued that dramatic action would be accepted. In their defence signs in public house windows publicans enticed would-be consumers with the opportunity to view 'war news' and exploited increased beer taxes to encourage the consumer to 'Be a patriot! Support the flag! Drink the national beverage and thus defeat our enemies.' (29) The *Alliance News* responded through an article called 'Drink Drama,' a column which pictorially portrayed examples of dereliction of duty caused by alcohol. (30)

The prohibition campaign continued unabated with staunch believers such as the UKA, supported by a new prohibitionist group, the Strength of Britain Movement. The Movement's chief protagonist, Arthur Mee, focused his attack on the use of scarce materials, especially grain, by the drink trade. His tracts, published under such titles as 'The Fiddler'

and 'The Parasite' were intended to leave no doubt about the damage drink was doing to the country. (31) The Trade's response was through the Whisky Association, which accumulated a fighting fund of £100,000 and formed a new pressure group 'The Freedom of Britain Movement.' (32) The Trade was well aware of its need to be seen as welcoming any reasonable demand made upon it, particularly when it came to the defensive forces of the country and the maintenance of public order, but threats of prohibition under the guise of a national crisis was seen as unduly interfering with the rights and liberty of the public. The Trade also protested against imposed drastic restrictions. In a leading article of the 3 April 1915, *The Times* suggested to its readers that a more sober view should be taken of the problem and there was a need to put the question of drink in the right place. The article recognised that 'the evil was serious enough, but that any talk of total prohibition, which has been proposed, is in our opinion out of proportion to the object.' (33)

The *Alliance News* was extremely active in temperance propaganda and used the war to its full advantage. The pledge taken by the King and Field Marshall Kitchener, war minister 1914-1916, was repeatedly highlighted and the Strength of Britain Movement was a constant reminder to Parliament. (34) One of the first actions of this movement was the publication of a petition with more than 2,000,000 signatures. This petition was an appeal to the government to prohibit liquor traffic during the war. The Temperance Movement placed a great deal of weight on the harmful and physical effect of alcohol. The licensed trade, on the other hand, placed a great deal of emphasis on the health giving properties of beer. Meanwhile the Central Control Board produced pamphlets in 1918 entitled, *Alcohol: Its Action on the Human Organism*. This showed that alcoholic drinks had only limited nutritional value and their action was narcotic rather than stimulant. On the other hand it showed that temperate consumption of them was physiologically harmless to 'normal' adults. (35)

Wartime control and especially the Carlisle experiment were central to the debate around drink and temperance both during and after the war and will be considered further below and in the next chapter. Whatever the precise causes, there was undoubtedly a dramatic decline in alcohol related issues. By 1929 convictions for drunkenness in England and Wales had fallen to 27.5 per cent of the 1913 level and in Carlisle to 22.8 per cent. suggesting that factors other than direct control may have had an effect. Between 1915 and 1918 beer production fell from 33.1 million standard barrels to 13.8 million and spirits distilled declined from 50.1 million to 37.1 million gallons over the same period. Consumption per head of beer fell from 25 to 10 gallons and of spirits from 0.74 to 0.31. (36)

From 1914 to 1918 the convictions for drunkenness in England and Wales fell from 183,828 to 29,075. (37) Shadwell concluded that the absorption of men in the services, restrictions on conditions of sale and the reduced supply of drink cannot be held solely responsible for the increase in national sobriety, but together they produced the desired effect. Despite the way many Chief Constables interpreted intoxication there was, nevertheless, a dramatic decrease in the levels of drunkenness. Shadwell was of the opinion that, 'the decline in drunkenness was a more striking success than any other control measurement.' (38) The Temperance Movement acknowledged this movement away from alcoholic consumption, but perhaps recognising its own limited contribution still believed that 'our teaching, preaching and argument have influenced the drinker but very slightly,' ... and 'the temperance world needs to get out of its present self-satisfied and self-congratulatory mood as it has made little impression upon the drinking public.' (39) The Temperance Movement wanted the abolition of the drink traffic not state control and the realisation that its aims and ambitions went unheeded provoked uncertainty. The ultimate object of control was to increase national efficiency, and through this an increase in the production of war materials; the control of drink was only a means to this end. Thus it was the necessities of war which dictated the



debate, not so much temperance or prohibition proclivity. Carver makes the point that almost every official statement regarding drink control, and all the leading newspapers comments upon it, condemned the Temperance Movement to the sidelines. (40)

### Prohibition and Deregulation

The ending of the war signaled a demand for a return to normality and an ending to restrictions. As expected, the Temperance Movement demanded that there be a careful consideration before any return to a pre-war situation was contemplated and made many suggestions, including the imposition of prohibition. By 1919 however shorter hours, higher prices, more civilised public houses and all the other control measures which had been tried had achieved a near miracle. The consumption of all forms of drink, in terms of absolute alcohol, had dropped from 89 million gallons in 1914 to 37 million in 1918, and the number of cases of drunkenness in England and Wales from 184,000 to 29,000 whilst deaths from alcoholism had been cut by five-sixths. (41) The need for continued, much less further, stringency seemed unnecessary.

While wartime restrictions in the UK began to be removed, in the United States the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcohol, became law, which only encouraged the more radical sections of the Temperance Movement. As we have seen, the British government did contemplate drastic action, at least for the duration of the war, but industrial considerations, financial restraints and the lack of public support made the government unenthusiastic. What was it then, that made the USA embrace prohibition and the UK accept limited control? It is worthwhile briefly to consider how Prohibition came about in the United States to highlight the differences. From Professor T. N. Carter's perspective, differing moral ideas demand some moral cohesive force that can bring about an homogeneous attitude towards legislation. Such moral unanimity requires a

country inspired by a high enthusiasm for a particular creed, be it tied to that of national efficiency, religious Puritanism or fascist patriotism. To such ideals, prohibition could be more readily fashioned. (42) This set of conditions materialised in the United States where there was also the romanticism and teaching that sober country life was good, while city life was wicked. (43)

The factors identified by Professor Carter, in one form or another, gave a dynamic to the prohibitionist cause. Although the main areas of prohibition were the areas where the Methodist and Baptist churches had their greatest strength, the Anti-Saloon League made sure that its doors were open to all denominations. In seeking to represent a united religious force it was able to focus its attention on its central idea of utilizing the organised churches as a political battering ram. (44) The Methodist Churches were the largest Protestant body in the country, and they worked closely with the Anti-Saloon League. The League, founded in 1893, claimed to be the political machine of the Protestant Churches in the matter of prohibition. The strength and fortitude of the Anti-Saloon League was formidable. Between 1911 and 1925 the average number of churches affiliated to the League was some 30,000 rising to a maximum of 60,000 at the peak of the League's influence. Through these churches the League collected up to two million dollars a year in revenue and called out dry votes against wet candidates in political elections. (45) In response to the accusation that it was a political machine, the League made it clear that 'the Church is a machine and the League is a machine within a machine ... constructed so that all personal advantage is submerged to the task of establishing sobriety in the nation. (46) The League was organized to give church people an effective political organization to fight the liquor traffic. From 1915 the Anti-Saloon League became the representative of the American Temperance Movement and in so doing became the official voice of the 'thousands of citizens who are opposed to the saloon and who have no interest in the churches as such.' The League did not want to be

seen as a rival to the church or to any other society but as a 'clearing house for church and temperance societies.' (47)

There is no doubt that the Anti-Saloon League became one of the most powerful political machines in the early twentieth century. Through its propaganda machine it mobilized support and concentrated its attention on the voters. T. M. Gilmore, president of the National Model License League suggested in 1908 that the Anti-Saloon League was 'the most dangerous power ever known in the politics of this country.' (48) As in the UK the Temperance Movement in the USA began with appeals to the individual to abstain from alcoholic drink. The message was the same; 'alcohol was a beverage that was not merely injurious when used in excess but was bad physically, mentally and socially, in any quantity.' (49) But waiting for the numbers of individual abstainers to reach a level, where they could be seen as a political threat was not the style of the League. The League set itself the task of creating through powerful propaganda, an emotional abhorrence of the saloon and the liquor traffic. The saloon was represented as the rendezvous of the criminal, as the office of the political manipulator and purveyor of drugs. Political corruption became strongly associated with the saloon and the League tirelessly argued that for politics to be purified, 'the saloon must be destroyed, we can never get the saloon out of politics so long as we get our politics out of the saloon.' (50) The emotional propaganda of the League was designed to frighten parents into the Anti-Saloon ranks and against saloon keepers who threatened millions of lives with their efforts to attract new customers. Notwithstanding the fact that the League insisted that its campaign was against the saloon and not a demand for prohibition, its propaganda made little effort to keep the issues distinct. The League suggested that, 'the liquor traffic has never obeyed the law and it never will.' (51)

The war gave the League a rare opportunity to deal the liquor traffic a mortal blow. As with the UK, there was an emphasis placed on the misuse of scarce materials like grain, and

the frantic appeals to sacrifice everything to win the war were contrasted with the criminal waste by the liquor traffic. Although its propaganda was, in some instances educational, its main message was political as its primary concern was with the voter. In an effort to reach a maximum audience, the League began to publish the *American Issue*. This temperance journal became the official organ of the League, and by 1914 its eight presses were printing more than forty tons of temperance literature each month, including thirty-one state editions of the *American Issue*, with an aggregate monthly circulation of more than 500,000. The war did force the League to reorganise its publishing work but in 1920 a total of 18,386,642 copies of the *American Issue* were printed. It is not surprising therefore that this deluge of information profoundly modified the behaviour of the American people toward the liquor traffic. By comparison, the UK Temperance Movement with temperance journals such as the *Alliance News* and the *Advocate* never came anywhere near this outpouring of temperance propaganda. The League's political objective was to hold the balance of political power. Actively to enter the contest as a political party would have destroyed this possibility. With the virtual control of a large block of votes, through the political organisation of the churches, however, the League could frequently force the major parties to nominate candidates friendly to its interests. Political defeat stared many a politician in the face if they chose to oppose the League and those seeking reelection did so at their peril. The powerful Anti-Saloon League was able to convince the American public that it was in its best interests entirely to prohibit the manufacture, sale and distribution of all alcoholic beverages. Organisational coherence gave a clear direction to the considerable energy behind temperance sentiment in the US which, when focused on obtaining a balance of political power allowed Prohibition to be achieved in a manner which U.K. prohibitionists might have envied but could scarcely emulate.

Wartime restrictions began to be reconsidered in the UK from February 1919 just when the US was about to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment. Enforced prohibition came into force in America on the 16 January 1920, inevitably giving the UK prohibitionists fresh hope, and causing the Trade many anxious moments. Encouraged by the efforts of the Anti-Saloon League, a campaign for prohibition by Local Veto was launched in London in November 1919. Many Americans came to the UK to join the campaign for prohibition, principally W. E. (Pussyfoot) Johnson. With financial backing from America, he established an office in Fleet Street, London, aiming to explain the many reasons why prohibition had become a central issue in American politics and why the Anti-Saloon League had been so successful. Fearful that the success of the Anti-Saloon League could be echoed in the UK, representatives of the Trade combined to form an anti-prohibition organisation. The country was flooded with literature and temperance meetings were broken up. The *Brewing Trade Journal* referred to Johnson in almost every issue in scathing terms. (52) Prohibitionists had expected hostility from publicans and brewers, but not from many MPs, prominent intellectuals and a large proportion of the press. Many drinkers testified to the blessings that drink had brought them, and their heavy expenditure was claimed as proof of public spiritedness; they were generously keeping the country solvent, while the teetotalers were meanly evading their fair share of taxation. (53) In retrospect it is small wonder that the principle of prohibition met with such hostility. Many people readily accepted the need for curtailment of beer production due to the demands made by the Food Controller, but prohibition was excessive.

Authoritative figures like Viscount Curzon MP regarded the Control Board regulations 'as being quite intolerable.' In correspondence with the Secretary of the Temperance League, Curzon suggested that it was right 'to be as severe as you like with those who offend against society by drinking to excess ... but do not rivet Control Board restrictions round the necks of

English people for all time.' (54) In 1921, The Licensing Act (11-12 Geo. 5.c.42) incorporated the principles as to 'Permitted hours' for the sale and supply of drink and the State ownership of the liquor trade in the Carlisle area, both of which had been central features of the Board of Control's action. (55) The introduction of the 1921 Act did, however, put an end to the Control Board, restoring full jurisdiction to the justices; retaining as it did some meritorious sections of the Board's conditions. These included early morning closing and a break in the afternoon and restricting clubs to the same regulations as licensed houses. The Home Office was made responsible for the administration of the State controlled districts. Through the Act, licensing hours were lengthened in the controlled areas and shortened in the uncontrolled areas. In areas where the hours were most extended and in particular, the permitted closing time prolonged to 11.00 PM, there was an increase in drunkenness. Such increases were achieved despite disposable income being reduced by high prices, falling wages, and growing unemployment. Further evidence that it was the length of opening times that dictated levels of drunkenness.

*The Times* noted that , 'the strength and acceptability of the new legislation lay in the fact that it was a partial return to prewar and a compromise at that.' (56) At the UKA annual meeting held in October of 1921, however its president, Leif Jones accused the government of not fulfilling its pledge that it would put into legislation the lessons gained during the war. He argued that the reforming energies of the present House of Commons had been exhausted as far as drink was concerned by the Licensing Act passed that year. (57) He continued to demand, however, as did other speakers, that prohibition was still their ultimate, but not immediate goal and advised them not to talk prohibition at the moment, but to concentrate on Local Veto. Further news of the prohibition campaign from America gave the English prohibitionist cause some hope as it was reported that a Salvation Army spokeswoman, Commander Evangeline Booth, had stated that since prohibition was enacted 'drunkenness

among the poor has almost entirely disappeared.' (58) Speaking at a meeting on the Responsibilities of Free Churchmen, Lloyd George addressed the topic 'Drink and Efficiency.' Lloyd George thought that drink expenditure was 'poisoning the national efficiency.' He made reference to all the drink experiments that had taken place over the last fifteen years and that the most remarkable was the one taking place in America. 'It was no use,' he suggested, 'indulging in the slapdash condemnation of the prohibitionists even though many had suggested that prohibition in America was the craze of cranks. Lloyd George went on to suggest that when he went to America he had found that there was not 'a vestige of truth in that view,' and that wherever he went he never met a man who would give a vote in favour of the saloon. As far as public opinion in America was concerned, 'the beer house was a thing of the past.' (59) However that same year *The Times*, in its usual 'American supplement' declared that 'on prohibition, we learn that in violation of the law there is still much drinking; that those who know the ropes can get liquor.' (60)

In America there had been a focused and determined temperance crusade. The minds of children had been influenced in church and Sunday schools. Texts taught the virtues of thrift, labour, obedience to God and temperance. By 1902 the majority of states had passed laws requiring temperance teaching in the public schools. In the eighty years before the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment, the drys had a near monopoly of the means by which results of research on alcohol reached the voters. The minds of a whole generation had been conditioned to feel guilty every time they took a drink of liquor. (61) The Anti-Saloon League wanted individual abstinence and part of its propaganda campaign was to frighten parents. The saloon was portrayed as the rendezvous of the criminal and the drug dealer and its demise only achievable through prohibition. Parents were therefore encouraged to protect their children through the elimination of the saloon and with it the abolition of the liquor industry. The tendency in the UK was to look upon alcohol as either harmless or beneficial

when taken in small quantities and to condemn only the excessive use of it. In America alcohol was viewed as being harmful absolutely and any talk of measurable quantity was treated with complete indifference. In the UK the Temperance Movement was divided and had no coherent aims and objectives. It was politically weak and outdated and it was up against a political system which favoured the anti-prohibitionists as there was no positive or agreed action from the major parties on a complete solution to the drink question. We have seen that the Conservatives acquiesced to almost all of the Trade's demands and the Liberal's failure to win elections on the weakest of prohibition causes, Local Veto, informed the politicians that the public would not accept prohibition. The Labour Party flirted with Local Veto and there some in the Labour ranks who believed in the American Experiment but neither options became firm Labour policy. An American commentator in 1929 noted that British efforts to control drink contrasted to the position with her native country: 'the liquor interests are far more powerful than they were in the US because they are finitely more respectable. The brewers and distillers are not rich but they are of the socially elect.' (62) In the US, prohibitionists had succeeded in becoming part of the mainstream; in the UK they had become outsiders increasingly divorced from political priorities and cultural trends.

### Hearts and Minds

By the late 1920s it was clear that a profound change had taken place in the nation's drinking habits. Many factors had contributed to this change including higher taxation and prices, reduced drinking hours and the diminished strength of beers. A quadrupling of the excise after 1918 which raised beer prices to 7d a pint by 1922 (double the pre-war level) obviously contributed significantly to reducing total beer consumption as did the fall in disposable incomes. Explaining this fall in consumption in purely economic terms is inadequate, however, as people's attitudes towards leisure had fundamentally changed and



the public house no longer retained its centrality as a social institution. (63) While the nation became more temperate, paradoxically, the Temperance Movement declined. It could not compete with new forms of entertainment and increasing secularism undermined its previous allies in the churches. Its political supporters, moreover, were also on a long term decline. In these circumstances a number of prominent temperance spokesmen began to develop a new approach to the drink question based on an analysis of wartime control, which attracted support from some in the churches. Even some in the UKA began to question their position but the result was only too predictable, further division and gloomy introspection. This section reviews some of the wider factors affecting temperance.

The Licensing Act of 1921 was clearly a disappointment to many temperance reformers and if they were to continue with their campaign drastically to reduce or even eliminate the consumption of alcoholic beverages, they had to have a new strategy. One important problem was that despite valiant efforts to achieve permanent legislation, their main allies in Parliament, the Liberals, were now the opposition party and not that keen to propose any temperance reforms that would interfere with the liberties of the 'working man.' The war had strengthened the position of organized labour and many trade union leaders had a status and bargaining position which they had never had before. These union leaders also realised that their social ambitions would be more achievable through a Labour government. Meanwhile the Conservative Party wanted a return to 'straightforward' government by a single political party after the wartime coalition. (64) Life for the Conservative Party was never to be the same either as the political progress of the Labour Party continued to gain momentum. Although its leaders had suffered defeats in 1918, it fielded nearly five times as many candidates as its previous maximum. (65) Ramsey MacDonald was elected leader in 1922 and in January 1924 the first Labour government was formed. MacDonald was unable to stay in office and a general election in October of that year returned an overall

Conservative Majority. What this signaled was a return to a two-party system, with Labour in the position formerly occupied by the party of temperance, the Liberals.

For the Temperance Movement to retain the focus of animosity towards the liquor trade it needed to keep and recruit new members. This became increasingly difficult for the Temperance Movement and the many church organisations due to the growth in leisure pursuits. Yeo's study of Reading highlights the many participatory activities like swimming, cycling and rowing clubs that mushroomed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Reading was described as a town whose 'social activities and amenities are of the highest power possible for a town of its size and population.' Religious bodies provided only a fraction of these amenities (66) Although spectator sports such as football and cricket continued to attract huge followings the biggest new attraction was the cinema. The cinema attracted members of all classes including the working class. Not only were the cinemas warm and comfortable; they were cheap, making them attractive even to the unemployed in the depressed areas. Roebuck suggests that the cinema became so popular that it 'wove itself into the fabric of social life at all levels.' (67) In 1931, it was estimated, on the basis of total weekly cinema attendance, that one third of the population of London went to the cinema. (68) In 1934, the first year for which reliable statistics exist, there was an average 18.5 million admissions to cinemas every weekend, a total of 963 million admissions for the year. (69) Traditional institutions such as the church and the pub found it difficult to compete with its ever growing popularity. The precise relationship between one form of escape and another is impossible to assess, suggests Roebuck, but it is probable that there had been some form of connection between the popularity of the cinema and the low level of drunkenness after the First World War.

Temperance decline would not have been helped by journals, such as the *Alliance News* and the *Advocate*, which failed to keep pace with modern times. They appealed to only a

limited readership, they nearly always ran at a loss, and they failed to attract and keep advertisers. Their format did little to encourage new readers focusing as they did entirely on the machinations of the drink trade, the unreliability of the politicians and the sometimes lukewarm response of the Church. But above all else they each had their own agenda and did nothing to encourage a union of temperance forces. Wilfred Winterton (an executive member of the UKA) in an open letter to all temperance reformers suggested that the new need of today was cohesion and concentration. Winterton did not make too much of nineteenth century divisions suggesting that it was the 'loss of the Licensing Bill of 1908' that had 'plunged the temperance reformation into the slough of despair.' (70) Despite this set back he was of the opinion that the Temperance Movement had begun to get its act together only for it to be dissipated by the outbreak of war in 1914. War had changed peoples attitudes and Winterton fully understood the need for the Temperance Movement to adapt to meet 'modern needs.' Many breweries had merged but the major temperance societies such as the UKA, BTL and the CETTS still proclaimed their independence. This division of effort and enterprise was, in Winterton's opinion, counterproductive and should be replaced by one national temperance society.

Winterton's hopes flew in the face of the many fissures that began to appear in the relationship between the religious and temperance forces in the UK, which formed only part of a general cynicism that was a feature of a growing secularism. It has been shown that the Temperance Movement did rely upon the churches when recruiting and keeping members and when the religious firmament of England began to wane there was a similar result on temperance. Explanations for this fall in 'non-church-going' varied and in an effort to justify their social involvement 'relevance' became the watchword. Alderman Sheppard, first Labour lord mayor of Bristol, told a conference on religion in the Labour movement that some of the finest Christian workers he knew 'rarely attended church or chapel' and many

true numbers of abstainers. (74) In a controversial move, Carter had been appointed to the Central Control Board in 1916 and in this capacity would have been privy to all the discussions on control and public ownership. Carter would have been aware of the UKAs prohibition demands but was entirely opposed to such ideas. He believed that as the sense of social responsibility deepened, progress towards acceptable legislation may become practicable, but that 'it would be a fundamental error to reverse this order of factors and demand drastic legislation for which the nation is unprepared.' (75)

Carter's moves towards a more moderate engagement with drink control was repeated in other analyses, especially of war-time experiences.. Stuart dismissed the view that disinterested management was responsible for the falls in consumption and drunkenness, but acknowledged that Spiritless Saturdays extended Sunday closing, liquor curtailment and dearness brought had enormous betterment. (76) Carver with uncomfortable perception noted the irrelevance of the Temperance Movement, 'almost every official statement regarding drink control and all the leading newspapers published regarding it, and never suspect that there was or ever had been a distinct Temperance Movement in Great Britain.' (77) Stuart is probably right to claim that reduction in licensing hours was the main reason for the falls in consumption and not disinterested management. Carver may be correct in the lack of attention given towards the Temperance Movement by the media and reference to it in official papers. He is also correct in suggesting that the Movement wasn't distinct, as each society did approach the drink question from different angles.

Shadwell's investigations into the causes of lost time during the war concluded that though drink was one of them, and a serious one in particular districts, there were several others much more important than the official reports allowed and no matter what was done with drink, there would always be some lost time in large establishments. Shadwell believed that men stayed away from work because they were unwell, over tired and really in need of

rest, or unable to face exposure in bad weather; in short suffering from temporary indisposition. (78) Such claims were reinforced by others who showed that only a small number of munitions workers drank to excess, and that over pressure and over fatigue were responsible for absenteeism not liquor. (79) Such were the vitriolic remarks made by some employers on the levels of drunkenness that many British workers suspected that they, not drink, was the target. Shadwell also concluded that excessive drinking could be effectively checked and the disability caused by it proportionally reduced by appropriate measures. This still allowed a degree of liberty sufficient to avoid a widespread revolt against the law or a resort to wholesale evasion. The police returns and the medical statistics confirming each other attested to the improvement of public order and public health in so far as they were drink related. Testimonies by employers and employees who called for control in the interests of industrial production and safety at work, proved that the object was achieved without provoking a dangerous reaction. All this work suggested that control and regulation would effectively combat the worst aspects of the drink question and reinforced the developing moderate social responsibility wing of the Temperance Movement. Prohibition moreover, was seen by many as an intolerable interference with personal liberty and dangerous because it was capable of indefinite extension. This was a major factor that was to prove insurmountable, for the prohibitionists.

There is evidence that prohibitionists too were questioning their approach. Many made reference to the Liquor Traffic Prohibition Bill, introduced by Edward Scrymgeour on the 20 April 1923. The UKA had published the following resolution to the Bill:

That this committee, believing that the traffic in intoxicating liquors as common beverages is inimical to the interests of individuals and destructive of the order and welfare of society, and being convinced that the ultimate solution of the Drink problem can only be found in the total extinction of the liquor traffic upon public welfare. Believing, however, that the principle of prohibition is the same whether the area of its operation is local or national, this

committee is of the opinion that a measure for securing local veto yields for the moment the largest advantage to the cause of temperance in as much as while it does not prejudice the future, it enables the advance of public opinion to be registered, and at the same time secures to progressive localities immediate protection against the evils which inevitably attend the common sale of intoxicating liquors. (80)

The UKA had always taken the line that the abolition of the drink traffic was its prime objective. A more tolerant approach is adopted in the resolution when it declares that the only solution has been replaced by the ultimate solution. Local Veto may have been seen as a sounding board to test public opinion but for it to work on any meaningful scale it would have needed widespread acceptance. Since its inception, the UKA had fought long and hard for prohibition and the number of times that Local Option bills appeared before Parliament is a measure of its fortitude.

Leif Jones, President of the UKA, suggested that it had 'never contemplated forcing prohibition on an unwilling people.' An understandable statement when it knew that the adoption of any prohibition policy could only be achieved through the ballot box. Leif Jones suggested that the objective of the UKA was now to 'enlighten people as to the nature and effects of alcohol, and to secure for the people the power to vote out the traffic if they wished to do so.' (81) Here again a somewhat naive statement as the effects of alcohol were widely known and he does not mention how voter apathy towards Local Veto was to be overcome. Despite the encouragement of the American Experiment he had reluctantly accepted that the prospects of getting a similar prohibition law through Parliament were remote. This left the UKA in a dilemma. It was a prohibitory organisation and its aims were prohibition legislation. Local Veto can only be seen as a partial solution as drinking could go on in private houses. It seems that the UKA was barely paying lip service to its stated objectives and instead limited itself to public education, which it was hardly enthusiastic about.

## Conclusion.

This chapter has examined the way the UK was forced to recognise the need for serious drink legislation during the First World War. Reasons for the legislation were many and in some instances not entirely convincing, but the final conclusion reached, was that 'excessive' consumption of alcohol was disrupting the prosecution of the war. Some temperance reformers may well have claimed responsibility for the introduction of the legislation but the evidence suggests differently. Certain sections of the Temperance Movement continued to make a case for prohibition, but prohibition was seen by many as an extreme and unrealistic measure, supported by only a minority of the Temperance Movement, rejected by the Control Board and opposed by public opinion. A detailed comparative study of the way both American and British societies saw the 'drink dilemma' is beyond the scope of this work, but a brief examination has highlighted the vast differences between the two approaches. In America, a single-minded and unified Anti-Saloon League was determined to gain maximum political support in which it was aided by a powerful propaganda tool; the *American Issue*. The League had huge financial resources and was able to act in a comprehensive and cohesive manner. By comparison the Temperance Movement was divided; its propaganda machine weak by American standards, and its political aims constantly thwarted by the British political system.

In 1921, the government removed the controls set in place by the DORA and despite dire warnings from the Temperance Movement there was no sharp increase in alcoholic consumption. Serious erosion to the Temperance Movement's religious foundations, brought about by an ever increasing growth in secularisation and leisure, also added to its growing problems. Its literature voiced a view of the world that retained its nineteenth century perspective and as such, left the Temperance Movement with declining support. Some temperance advocates recognised the changing nature of the issue and developed a new line

of approach. Hard line prohibitionists also began to speak differently, but seemed unable to convince themselves. If the Temperance Movement still had a message to get across to an increasingly sceptical audience, remarkably an opportunity to do so arose with the appointment of another Royal Commission in 1929.



## Notes

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Introduction.

The legislation introduced at the start of the First World War was not brought about by the Temperance Movement. That the law succeeded in its task can be seen in the falling conviction figures for drunkenness, the falling liquor consumption figures and the decline in the number of public houses. (1) With the introduction of the 1921 Licensing Act it might have been expected that this decline would have been reversed but, again the figures show that this was not the case. (2) The Temperance Movement was understandably happy with this decrease in the drink traffic, but were not entirely pleased with the introduction of the 1921 Act. Forever pessimistic on the ability of society successfully to control its demand for alcoholic substances, the Temperance Movement continued to press for Local Veto. Brian Harrison suggests, however, that 'temperance ceased to be a live political issue after the First World War.' (3) With its falling membership numbers, the continual fall from grace of the Liberal Party and the continual warring between the many temperance factions, this statement has great validity. Yet it was found necessary to appoint a second Royal Commission in 1929 to investigate licensing legislation.

By the time of the commission, however, the Temperance Movement seemed unwilling to co-operate. The UKA claimed that it continued to 'fight the battle started over a century ago' but suggested that efforts were being made to use the Commission as a means of diverting the Temperance Movement from their main duty which, according to the UKA, 'was to educate the people so that they will make an end of the liquor traffic by the influence of their personal habits and by their political power.' (4) What is noticeable from this statement is that prohibition or local Veto seems to have disappeared from their vocabulary and had been replaced by the 'need to educate the people.' That the UKA clearly disliked the Royal Commission is put beyond doubt when the UKA suggested that, 'whatever qualities the

Report of the Royal Commission may possess it bluntly rejects those ideals which form the foundation of the Temperance Movement.' It was also made very clear by the UKA that it, in common with other temperance Societies, 'never asked for a Royal Commission and had no special reason to place any particular confidence in the majority of its personnel.' (5) It appears that temperance organisations, accepting their marginalisation had begun to marginalise themselves. Despite their scepticism temperance reformers did not refuse to give evidence before the Commission but realised that it would be in a social atmosphere totally removed from when they last appeared before the Peel Commission.

This chapter will consider the place of temperance in the political situation of the 1920s and the early 1930s. This period brought a new factor, the Labour Party, more permanently into play, which was actually responsible for establishing the Amulree Commission, and we must view the position of the labour movement with respect to temperance. The Amulree Commission offered yet another, probably undeserved, opportunity for the Temperance Movement to influence the drink debate. Some elements did contribute to the Commission, in developing strand of drink as part of a much wider social question. The Victorian mainstay, however, refused to engage with the changing situation; simply reiterating their position which they now did not even hope to see implemented.

### The Labour Party and Temperance.

With the decline of the Liberals, the Temperance Movement shifted its attention to the Labour Party to see how far it might be prepared to support temperance Measures. It was in fact a Labour government that appointed the Amulree Commission and it is important to consider the Labour movement's position on drink. Temperance advocates could be found in the trade unions, the co-operative societies and the political parties. From Chartism and the Rochdale Pioneers, continuing through to the formation of the TUC and the modern Labour party, temperance ideas played an important part in policy formation. Socialist opposition to

alcoholic drink was, however, constrained by a number of influences. Most important of all, of course, was the fact that masses of workers were dependent upon drink and the public house for their social life, and supporters of temperance in the Labour movement had to be careful not to alienate working-class constituents. (6) By 1914, many socialists had also rejected the notion that poverty was caused by drink, asserting that poverty was directly attributable to the economic system of capitalism but drink remained an important issue. (7) In 1905 a Trade Union and Labour Officials' temperance Fellowship was organised under the auspices of the National Temperance League (NTL). This group survived the war and lasted into the 1920s. Indeed, a feature of the TUC conferences during the twenties and thirties was the annual temperance demonstration, at which members of the NTL and trade union functionaries discussed drink-related questions. (8)

Jones suggests that there were three distinguishable socialist approaches to the drink question. Firstly, state purchase, the transfer of ownership and control of the liquor trade from private to public hands; secondly, the libertarian or club view, that there should be little interference with personal drinking habits; and finally personal abstinence. (9) With the abandonment of the Central Control Board, a Labour campaign for the Public Ownership and Control of the Liquor Trade was formally launched in 1919. One of its secretaries, Arthur Greenwood suggested, that 'organised labour is solidly and overwhelmingly in favour of public ownership and control of the liquor trade.' (10) Greenwood believed in the contemporary medical evidence regarding the 'narcotic influence' of drink and its relationship, no matter how tenuous, on disease, crime and destitution. In this he would have found support from the Temperance Movement, but not that of state ownership. Since the consumption of beer was widely acknowledged as a central working class leisure activity, 'to which the Public House has contributed very largely,' the notion of prohibition was rejected as being fundamentally against the Labour interest. Rather than focusing on the inherent

characteristics of drink, emphasis was switched to the question of ownership, for it was the conditions of sale that were said to be injurious. (11) The Labour Campaign for the Public Ownership and Control of the Liquor Trade, in the years immediately after the war, was influential. In early 1920 the executive committee of the Labour Party appointed an advisory committee on temperance policy. This committee recommended that the party 'actively pursue' a policy of state purchase, and at the same time a number of Labour and socialist Labour organisations declared themselves in favour of such a policy. (12)

The main assumption behind the case for public ownership was that drink when sold under conditions of private enterprise and freedom, could destroy individual responsibility and citizenship. There was however, large numbers in and around the Labour movement who disagreed with such an analysis. 'Libertarian Socialists' believed that moral action and individual habits, such as drinking, were essentially personal, and if a worker who drank could not afford a decent standard of living this was the fault of capitalism; a system, which it was suggested, denied the individual an equitable wage. In Yorkshire, 'bureaucratic' control of the drink trade was regarded as 'Frankenstein,' which 'was economically, commercially and socially wrong.' (13) In their opinion, workers should be entitled to decide exactly when, where and how much alcoholic drink they consumed. Though sobriety was applauded, curtailment of personal drinking habits, by state control or by prohibition, was resented. The most hostile section of the working class to come out against anything that threatened the loss of individual rights was the Working Men's Club and Institute Union (CIU). The CIU and especially its supporters on the left, had an overall philosophy which stressed freedom in matters relating to individual leisure preference. (14)

To these three approaches identified by Jones there must be added a fourth. Evidence that is available suggests that temperance socialists did not have a uniform approach to drink, and in the 1920s many of them believed in prohibition. In June 1920, the Labour Party declared



in favour of local option thus giving the electorate the opportunity to decide whether liquor should be prohibited, licences reduced, or ownership put under private or public control. (15)

This was a noticeable victory for temperance, and showed that prohibitive measures had some Labour support. Ethel and Phillip Snowden were representative of those ethical socialists who would have nothing to do with the Labour Campaign for the public ownership of the liquor trade. Their rebuke of the Campaign was based on the premise that state purchase 'would prevent the full use of any power to prohibit the liquor traffic either nationally or locally, and so jeopardise the chance of achieving total prohibition.' (16)

Phillip Snowden's proud boast of 1921 was that:

Labour is unmoved by the argument of the liquor trade that Local Option is an unwarranted interference with personal freedom. Labour regards freedom to indulge in a practice which ruins health, which destroys industrial efficiency, which lowers moral stamina and is the greatest obstacle to the success of social reform, as the negation of true liberty. Labour believes that the community has a right to restrain personal freedom where its exercise is manifestly injurious to the individual and the community. (17)

Inevitably, the existence of these conflicting ideas led to controversy and to a certain degree of internal dispute. There was, in short, a marked difference of opinion in the Labour ranks towards temperance reform. As one local newspaper expressed it;

The Labour Party is thoroughly mixed in its opinions. There are prohibitionists in the party, there are men in favour of the nationalisation of the drink traffic; there are opponents of nationalisation ... and there are large numbers of members ... who will not take up definite attitude at all, because they are afraid of losing the club vote. (18)

In an effort to open up the debate regarding the drink question several socialist authors rehearsed the various potential benefits that were supposed to follow the conquest of excessive drinking. Some accrued directly to the individual and the family, for example, better mental and physical health, improved diet, furniture, clothing and housing. (19) Some accrued to society, for example, smaller expenditure on hospitals, poor law institutions, courts and prisons. (20) Some were political such as the belief that 'a drunken democracy' was incapable of social reform and that the only sober intelligent workman would fight for

better conditions. (21) Some offered a solution to Britain's lack of industrial competitiveness through lower absenteeism and higher productivity. (22) Some, reflecting changes in economic theory, promised that a world devoid of expenditure on alcohol would be a world without unemployment. Some were quite simply dotty and ignored the frailty of human behaviour in non-alcoholic directions: 'If you get rid of drink the doors of the Divorce Courts would be almost closed.' (23) Temperance could thus still be seen almost as a universal panacea for the problems both of the individual and the whole of society. (24) Arthur Henderson promised in 1921 that given, 'an army entirely dissociated from strong drink ... it would not be long before they crush the very life out of capitalism.' (25) Temperance might not have been, in itself the solution of poverty, but it certainly removed an influence which, as the 1923 *Labour and Liquor Trade Report* recognised, compounded it. (26) Drink both impoverished and demoralised. The North Ham constituency party in 1919 urged that there should be no drinking facilities at the new Labour Hall, since the need of the movement was clear thinking, which was not encouraged by alcohol. (27) Gordon Lang declared in 1922: 'The ideals of Labour will never fructify amidst unchecked whisky palaces and its intellectual appeal will fall in vain upon a drunken democracy.' (28)

Conscious that the drink question was still unresolved, delegates at many Labour meetings and conferences tried to test the water with mischievous resolutions on prohibition. At the Labour party conference in 1921, for instance, there was what the local press called a 'prohibition uproar,' when amidst 'accusations of trickery' the Executive Committee was compelled to withdraw a contentious motion on prohibition. (29) Delegates attending the Conference would have been aware of the growth in working men's clubs since the turn of the century and the pressure they could bring. They were generally seen as valuable social and recreational facilities for working men, rather than drinking emporiums, as the denominational press tended to suspect. There was also the political dimension from those

who were perhaps keen to avoid the active opposition of the clubs in their constituencies. Cost factors also diminished the enthusiasm for state control of municipalisation of the trade, in order to make public houses places of refreshment and recreation rather than intoxication. (30)

Attitudes to drink in the party clearly varied considerably. Many sections of the Labour movement were equally likely to call for an extension of licensing hours than the passing of temperance legislation. Some constituency parties and trade councils were as unhappy about the temperance activities of their MPs as were the clubs organisations. J. H. Hudson was even reprimanded for temperance advocacy in the constituency of another candidate by the NEC in 1929. (31) Snowden, one of the most fervent of teetotalers, was nevertheless able to report, 'some of the most energetic of my workers are members of clubs and respect me for my attitude.' (32) Not all Free Church Labour MPs were willing to put this to the test by opposing the will of the clubs. This was as likely as not because the clubs had no formal position within the party structure from which to attack temperance MPs. (33) This tension was increasingly reflected in the fudging of Labour's temperance policy. At the 1924 and 1929 elections all it offered was a Royal Commission. The *Alliance News* on the later occasion was in no doubt that this offer merely reflected the extent to which the party was divided on the issue. (34)

### The Royal Commission

The Labour Party went into the 1920 general election without a stated policy and activists did not know how Labour would 'deal with the drink problem when it came to power.' (35) The party chose the easy option - they promised to appoint a Royal Commission to make full enquiry into the matter. (36) In its manifesto for the 1929 election entitled *Labour and the Nation* the Labour Party declared that:

A Labour government would appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into the developments and changes which have taken place both at home and abroad in recent years, and to report what modifications in the law and what changes in the method of control should be made with a view to the necessary legislation. (37)

As George Buchanan astutely commented: 'We will funk coming to a decision, and will fling to a RC.' (38) In September 1929, a Royal Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Amulree, began its enquiry into:

'the workings of the law relating to the sale and supply of intoxicating liquor and into the social and economic aspects of the question, and to examine and report upon proposals that may be made for amending the law in England and Wales.' (39)

From the outset, the Commission was aware that social habits had changed in the direction of society and a lower consumption of alcohol. Evidence to support this view came in the many reports published about the national consumption of intoxicating liquors. These were due to changes of social standard, the growth of greater attractions to drinking, the reduction of licences, restriction of hours and the taxation of drink. G.B.Wilson estimated the total drink bill for England and Wales as £128,581,925 in 1909, £137,041,000 in 1913, and £213,000,000 in 1932. The figures for national consumption of beer, sprits and wine however show a different picture: (40)

	1909 (UK)	1913 (UK)	1932 (GB & NI)
Beer (standard barrels)	32,290,000	35,250,000	14,024,000
Spirits (gallons)	31,060,000	31,790,000	9,600,000
Wine (gallons)	11,400,000	11,370,000	12,272,000

There was still the perception, at least within the Temperance Movement that the levels of drunkenness remained a problem. The figures produced by Wilson show that there may have been at the beginning of the century, but it was apparently much diminished at the end of 1932.

	1909 (UK)	1913 (UK)	1923 (GB & NI)
Proceedings	190,495	213,188	35,407
Convictions	169,518	188,877	30,146
Convictions per 10,000 population	47.85	51.16	7.5

An anomaly exists however in the recording of such cases as the Commission acknowledged and as the Temperance Movement continually claimed:

The figures of convictions cannot be taken as an accurate measure either of the total amount of sobriety at any given time, or - having regard to the considerable variations in police and magisterial practice - of comparative conditions in different locations. (41)

In a written statement to the Commission, N. Kendal, Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Police submitted:

In practice we never charge a man for being drunk unless he is either (a) disorderly or (b) incapable ... the chance of getting any doctor to certify as drunk, or any magistrate to convict as drunk, a man who can look after himself and has not caused any trouble to his fellows does not exist. (42)

The written statement from R.L. Mathews Chief Constable of Leeds confirmed:

In practice it is very difficult for the police to discriminate as to whether a person is 'drunk' ... and I am afraid that it would be very difficult to obtain a conviction for this offence unless the person in question had been taken to a police station and medically examined. (43)

In his evidence to the Commission W. Hamilton Whyte, an economics lecturer at Bristol University, presented the results of his investigation of the effect of alcoholic consumption on industrial efficiency. In a wide ranging survey, Whyte interviewed 150 employers, representing over 100,000 employees in the shipbuilding and coal mining industries. Those interviewed had declared that drunkenness amongst the work force had dramatically decreased since 1914. The reasons given for this change were (a) Legislative and Fiscal - restrictions of the hours and higher prices due to higher taxes. (b) Industrial - Trade depressions and changes in the organisation of industry. (c) Social - Education and improved living standards of living. (44) High on the list of the Temperance Movement's arguments

against the liquor industry was the economic havoc caused by drunkenness. This evidence shows that it was increasingly difficult to prove drunkenness and dramatic falls in alcohol consumption removed the perceived threat to industrial efficiency.

Understandably, the Carlisle experiment was a subject of particular interest. Giving his evidence before the Commission, Sir John C. G. Sykes, on behalf of the Home Office had suggested that the objective of the 'Carlisle Scheme' was to supply liquor in such a way as to meet public demand under the best possible conditions. It was also envisaged that this would discourage excessive drinking and help in the promotion of sobriety. In the hope of getting a much clearer picture of the levels of drunkenness in a scheme which had at its heart 'disinterested management,' Sykes was asked if he thought that there had been a decrease in the levels of drunkenness when compared to other districts in England. His response was to conclude that it would prove difficult to make a fair comparison, but when pressed thought that 'State Management had been conducive to sobriety.' (45) The former General Manager of the Carlisle and District State Management Area, Sir Edgar Sanders was also of the opinion that there was 'no real drunkenness problem at present.' (46) The Very Rev Henry V. Stuart, Dean of Carlisle believed that there was no doubt that the 'responsible citizens of Carlisle generally consider that the present system is infinitely superior to what preceded it.' (47)

In his evidence to the Commission, A. A. Johnstone, the Chief Constable of Carlisle, gave background evidence as to the effect the Central Control Board had on the city. On the 1st of July 1916, the Board commenced to acquire breweries and licensed premises in the city and at the end of 1916 the number of licensed premises had been reduced from 119 to 95. Many of the houses closed had been situated in narrow lanes and back streets, and many of the main public houses had been reconstructed, rebuilt or improved. Such architectural changes had improved supervision by the manager and his staff and had given more air, space and

light for the customers. In his evidence, Johnstone emphasised the importance he attached to the take over by the Board on the reduction in convictions for drunkenness. These had peaked in 1916 at 953 convictions for drunkenness but by 1929 had fallen to 54. Johnstone made it clear to the Commission that he did not differentiate between State controlled houses and ordinary licensed premises. He assured the Commission that as far as he was concerned, 'there was no collusion between the State and the police in Carlisle. If there are any offences to be dealt with they are dealt with accordingly to the law in the ordinary way.' (48)

In sharp contrast was the evidence given by the Rev A. J. Courtney, a Wesleyan Minister and formerly Temperance and Social Welfare Secretary for the Carlisle District Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. He was also asked to appear on behalf of the UKA to give evidence on the character of the Carlisle Scheme. (49) Courtney made reference to the Carlisle Temperance League who had suggested in 1926:

That this League, taking all things into consideration, and after close observation, has concluded that the Carlisle Scheme of State Control of the drink trade has proved a failure as a measure of temperance reform, and has in no way provided a solution to the drink problem. (50)

Courtney believed that the Central Control Board had provided no evidence that (a) there was less drinking or less drunkenness in Carlisle than any other town; (b) there was a greater reduction in convictions compared with 1913 than in any other cities; or that the people of Carlisle had, on the whole, benefited by the State management and State sale of drink; (c) a better use made of wages in Carlisle than in any other towns; (d) the tradesmen (grocers, drapers, bakers, butchers, shoemakers or house builders) had profited; (e) the women and children were better fed and clothed or the children better supplied with milk. (51) Disinterested Management was, for Courtney, 'a more mischievous form of vested interest than those of the private monopolist.' (52) He was also of the opinion that those who believed that taking liquor out of private hands would take liquor out of politics, were sadly

mistaken. He believed that the 'so-called disinterested State publican will not have his trade politics extinguished.' (53) The basis of this evidence was that over a period of eighteen months from January 1925 to August 1926, Courtney had visited many Carlisle houses dressed as near as possible to public house clients.

Courtney noted that it had been claimed by the Central Control Board that by extinguishing private interest in the sale of liquor, and by establishing a strict system for the control and inspection of public houses, it would be possible both to reduce excessive drinking, and ensure that restrictions, such as those imposed by the Board's orders, would be effective. It was also claimed that this would be, to an extent, impossible under conditions of private management and of ill-regulated competitive trading. In his survey however, Courtney found that the 'inspection' of public houses proved to be ineffective. Police witnesses claimed that as the public houses were State controlled, it was a State affair if the licensing laws were not being followed. One witness had suggested that 'they have their own inspectors, who go round every night; they are no use, (54) In Courtney's opinion the selling of drink in England ought to be under the absolute and individual control of the justices, and that private ownership was preferable to private ownership. (55) What Courtney appears to be suggesting is that pub inspection would be far more rigorous under private ownership. Despite the fact that his anecdotal evidence to the Commission was clearly based on close observation, no questions were put to Courtney on what precisely drunkenness was. From Courtney's point of view it was difficult to reconcile the many instances of drunkenness that he had witnessed in Government houses in Carlisle with their supposed improvement. 'Drunkenness' he asserted, 'does exist in Carlisle, on the streets and in the houses.' (56) For a temperance campaigner, that was enough to condemn the whole Carlisle experiment.

Leif Jones, president of the UKA, when called to give evidence was questioned on the probability of extensive Local Veto being implemented. In the new line being developed by



the UKA, Leif Jones replied that Local Veto would help, but also suggested that 'enlightenment should be the aim.' His answers to the Commission were vague and unresponsive, preferring to skirt around the questions put to him. 'People will only keep straight in the end if they wanted to do so' and he believed that this is what was happening. (57) Evidence from the Rev Wilson Stuart was very similar to that of Courtney's and Leif Jones. This is not that surprising, as Stuart was for a time on the staff of the UKA, and was therefore in sympathy with its aims that, 'the State had no moral right to allow justices to licence the sale of alcoholic liquor.' (58) From Stuart's perspective, his investigation of the Carlisle Scheme was conducted with objectivity, despite the fact that the Commission had questioned his bias towards the subject. (59) When pressed by the Commission, Stuart declared that 'he was totally opposed to disinterested management under every form that had been proposed.' (60) He believed that despite the alterations that had been made to many of the public houses in Carlisle, he was of the opinion that the 'average public house in Carlisle was very unwholesome.' He declared in a *precis* to the Commission that, 'no decent working man would ever consider taking his family into such places.' (61) Stuart considered that this answer was based on the results of observation and conversation. There is not much doubt however, that his response to the probing questions from the Commission on what he deemed to see as the 'decent working man, led to his answers becoming more and more convoluted and patronising.

Also called to give evidence was the Political and Literary Secretary of the UKA, G. B. Wilson who stated that the task of any reformer would be enhanced if it were possible 'to assign specific causes for social evils.' Although he acknowledged that there was 'a poverty due to economic conditions and accidental circumstances.' (62) Wilson reiterated the familiar theme that directly and indirectly, drink was responsible for the 'greatest part of the poverty, crime, incompetence, sickness and early death which afflicted the great mass of

poorer people.' (63) Wilson was a declared prohibitionist who wanted to get rid of the liquor traffic in a 'proper time and place.' (64) When asked, however, if he could not get prohibition what would he do, he declined to answer. (65) He did believe however, that the 'improved public house' could never be successful as a universal plan of dealing with the drink question. The improved public house policy he suggested, 'is one for capturing the young people.' (66)

Speaking on behalf of the whole of the organised temperance forces in the country, Dr C. Weeks was in no doubt that the Commission offered the Temperance Movement an ideal opportunity to present the facts upon which the Movement based its case and enthusiastically relaunched the attack. He spent a great deal of his initial evidence to the commission refuting the brewers claims that 'a glass of good beer is as good as a glass of milk.' (67) With backing of the medical profession, the Temperance Movement did not need to convince anyone on the health problems associated with 'heavy drinking.' Weeks attacked the custom of farmers in Herefordshire and elsewhere to pay their workers part of their wages in the form of free cider, condemned the custom of allowing children of such districts, to bring cider to school for their midday meal. Weeks was also convinced that one of the results of cider drinking in Herefordshire was, 'a good deal of insanity.' (68) Weeks also believed that with regard to the Army, Navy and Mercantile Marine, that it had been long established that there was a causal relationship between excessive drinking and venereal disease. (69) Moderate drinking also came under Weeks' scrutiny, claiming as he did that, it interfered with industrial and commercial efficiency and ignoring evidence to the contrary. He also made reference to the work undertaken by Dr Vernon during the war who had investigated the effect that alcohol had had at certain large factories and concluded 'that the accidents dwindled as the consumption of alcohol dwindled.' (70) This statement had been well supported by evidence from the prohibitionists in the United States, who had shown that

prohibition had cut down the industrial accident record. What Weeks sought was the 'utter and entire elimination of alcohol from the life of the nation by the educated will of the people.' (71) Yet he could not say how this was to be achieved. When questioned on his prohibitionist attitude, the Commission made reference to his statement in the 'New Campaign' in 1928 when Weeks had declared that he could not support State prohibition because the country was not ready for it. (72) Weeks believed that if the public could be educated to such an extent that they would realise the danger of alcohol, and be prepared to prohibit it, then he could agree.

While the Victorian temperance associations continued to labour their familiar themes, albeit with somewhat less enthusiasm, a different, and rather more positive approach was indicated by church organisations. Representing the Temperance Council of the Christian Churches was the Rev E. Benson Perkins, Superintendent Minister of the Central Mission, Wesleyan Methodist Church. The Council was formed in 1915 and was a Federation of the Temperance Executives of all the Churches, namely the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and all sections of the Free Churches. The Council had advocated four legislative reforms. One was the exclusion of young people from liquor bars; a reform achieved by the enactment of the Intoxicating Liquor (Sale to persons under Eighteen) Act, 1923. The other three were, restrictions upon clubs, Sunday closing and local option. Of the three remaining programmes of agreed reforms it was local option that was highest on the Council's agenda. Local option was defined as:

The power vested in the electorate in a defined locality to decide, by the exercise of the vote (by such a majority as may be determined), questions affecting the local liquor traffic, and, in particular, the question of the continuance or extent of the retail sale and supply of intoxicating liquors within that locality. (73)

The idea of local option had been given renewed currency by the rapid development of new housing areas in and around the main centres of population since the war. Perkins

believed that these 'new housing areas provided an opportunity to face an entirely new set of social circumstances.' (74) In his statement to the Commission, Perkins suggested that there was an intimate association between the crowded and depressing housing conditions and excessive drinking. Such excesses were, he suggested, almost entirely due to those areas which had congested or redundant licences. (75) The procedure with regard to the question of licences for the sale of alcoholic liquors in the new housing estates varied in different centres. Liverpool Corporation, in laying down the lines of their housing policy in 1926, adopted a resolution that no site on the new estate should be leased or sold for licensed premises. The Anglican Bishop of Liverpool suggested that:

To admit ordinary licensed houses in this district now would be to impose on the inhabitants a set of conditions which will be for many years fixed by vested interests. When they are able to choose for themselves they must have a free choice in the same conditions that were promised them when they first came. (76)

Since 1907, the authorities in the new Garden City Letchworth had left the decision on whether there should, or should not be a licensed house within a new estate to the people resident in the area. On five occasions since 1907, the majority had been against a licence. In other centres like Birmingham, however, it had been assumed that provision needed to be made for the sale of alcoholic beverages in the customary way. Where this had been done, attempts had generally been made to secure the erection of 'improved public houses.'

Perkins was eloquent in his defence of local option, as a fair and equitable method for dealing with a difficult and challenging problem. Responding to those like Baldwin, who believed that interference with the free behaviour of individuals should be minimal; Perkins suggested that 'Unfettered individual liberty is a fiction of the imagination.' (77) Local option was, for Perkins, an opportunity to place the power of control in the hands of the people themselves, giving them 'the opportunity to use their liberty of action for ends that are conceived to be in the highest interest of all.' (78) Local option was not put forward

specifically as a temperance measure, nor was it put forward by the Council of Christian Churches as such, nevertheless if the majority in a community agreed to Local Option, then it was possible to advance temperance reform.

One of the most forceful and commanding witnesses was Viscount Astor and his evidence is worth considering in some detail, even if it failed to move the Commission. Astor had been a Conservative Member of Parliament since 1910, and had opposed the policy of the Temperance Movement. He was also proprietor of the *Observer* which he used to his advantage. Circumstances then forced him to study the drink problem which dramatically altered his perception, and in 1915, he was made a member of the Liquor Control Board.

Astor had previously been of the opinion that:

Temperance reformers are apt to be extremists and cranks; they are usually Liberal; brewers and publicans are good fellows and usually Conservative; the temperance people do not work for you even if you adopt their policy; individual brewers support your Conservative Association which cannot afford to lose their subscriptions, any more than you want to do without votes which they influence. But if you wish to identify yourself with the trade leave the question alone. (79)

The evidence submitted by Astor was by far the most voluminous. Between 1917 and 1918 Astor was involved with licensing legislation when acting as an arbiter between the Trade and temperance organisations. As a member of the Medical Research Council, 1914-1919 and Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health 1919-1921 he became cognisant of the medical consequences of excessive drinking. When his wife became an MP in 1919 and piloted a bill to keep the young (under 18) out of drinking bars, the Trade consistently sought her removal from public life. (80) Contemporaries who had also felt Trade aggressiveness related their experiences to Astor and as such he became extremely versed in the tactics adopted by the Trade when it chose to persecute those who threatened its existence. Such practical life experiences made him entirely suitable to give evidence and his role as a newspaper proprietor would not have done him any disservice when the

Commission was faced with who to call as witnesses. Equally, the fact that he was an aristocrat gave an added piquancy to his choice as the titled still commanded respect and awe.

Astor had also been attracted to the 'improved public house' and had been a member of the True Temperance Association founded in 1909, which acted as a protagonist for the Trade. His conversion to temperance, however, opened his eyes to the magnitude of the Trade's power, and his evidence was a damning indictment of a surreptitious and manipulative interest group. Astor then went on to describe lesser known pressure groups against temperance, like the Anti-Prohibition League, launched in 1919 and called itself a temperance society, founded by the British men and women to oppose prohibition. The United Kingdom of Temperance Crusaders was mainly used to help the Trade in London municipal politics. They urged club members to 'utilise their clubs to their full endeavours to turn out of Parliament every MP who is anxious to deprive them of their privileges.' (81) Apart from the emergence of these 'pseudo temperance societies,' financed by the Trade to disrupt the prohibition movement, the Trade also made effective use of those who openly declared themselves drinkers. The heavy expenditure on alcohol was claimed as public-spiritedness; the drinkers were generously keeping the country solvent, while the teetotallers were mainly evading their fair share of taxation. (82)

The Trade had at its disposal therefore, a vast and powerful propaganda organisation. It had been claimed at a Licensed Victuallers Association meeting that 'each member of the Trade was sufficiently powerful to command 10 votes.' (83) Astor estimated that the Trade could therefore influence and control 1,000 to 2,000 votes per constituency. This was, he suggested, 'a most dangerous power for an industry whose commercial and political activities and interests conflict with the public interest.' (84) The Trade's expenditure also came under Astor's scrutiny. He claimed that the yearly expenditure by the Trade on political

organisation and propaganda was, on average, about £400 per parliamentary constituency. The money spent on advertising alcoholic beverages averaged out to £4,000 per constituency. (85) The average annual total expenditure of the Trade on political organisation and propaganda was between £200,000 and £250,000. These amounts were in sharp contrast to the amount of money available to the Temperance Movement. The annual average total expenditure of the Temperance Association organisations was something under £20,000. (86)

Astor was convinced that the Trade could not reform itself and suggested that they (the Trade) could not retain the *status quo* and remain passive. The Trade could not try to reduce consumption or reduce the strength of beverages as they had consistently opposed such measures. Astor suggested to the Commission that there were only three possible systems for dealing with drink. (1) Private Ownership. Improving the public house was a solution if it was coupled with public ownership as at Carlisle. (2) Public Ownership. The control and supply of drink would be vested in a public body, whose accounts would be subject to public audit. Benefits of such a system would be in 'Disinterested Control' and the lack of funds available from the system to 'influence' politicians or the press. (3) Prohibition. Against the total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of all intoxicants by Act of Parliament for the whole country. Astor suggested that there was no great demand for State purchase, at the moment, and that it would be more difficult to carry through Parliament in peace time than during the war. He too reached a rather negative conclusion that history had proved that it was practically impossible to pass a Licensing Bill through Parliament without the support of the Trade, or the Temperance Movement (or a strong section of it). Equally it would be impossible to drive a bill through Parliament against the opposition of both these interests, and without the fighting drive of one of them.

In an equally remarkable turn round, many of the statements made by Astor were repudiated by E. J. F. Oldmeadow, Editor of *The Tablet* since 1923 and since 1920 honorary

adviser to the Wine and Spirit Trade Defence Fund. From 1890 until 1900 Oldmeadow had been a Wesleyan Minister, and had accepted the opinions of his temperance colleagues. Theological doubts however, culminated in his resignation from his pastoral office and he was then able to satisfy his travel ambitions. Extensive travel through eighteen European countries gave him the opportunity to visit many inns and refreshment houses, leading him to believe that there was nothing wrong with 'a good tavern or inn.' (88) As an adviser to the Wine and Spirit Trade Defence Fund he had recommended that they renounce to the public 'Our Trade our Politics.' 'A Briton can come out of a particular trade but he cannot cease to be a Briton. Our country comes before our trade.' (89) This statement had been included in a document posted to 15,000 temperance workers, clergymen, legislators and other public men and Oldmeadow was quick to point out Astor's lack of reference to it. Oldmeadow also believed that temperance reform had been brought to deadlock, largely by Astor's use of the *Observer*. (90) Under the guise of his 'Correspondent' Astor was accused of bringing the names of those men and women connected with the fund into disrepute, a technique used by the Anti-Saloon League in America when it sought to discredit its opponents.

Other witnesses appearing before the Commission were questioned on their stance on prohibition. The Right Rev The Lord Bishop of Barling was not in favour of prohibition, but 'if the people wanted it he was in favour of it being implemented.' (91) The industrialist, Sir Arthur Balfour, a seasoned traveller of America and Canada and an anti-prohibitionist believed that 'you cannot make people good by legislation, and I think the prohibition laws in America prove it.' (92) Because of his YMCA experience Sir Arthur K. Yapp appeared on behalf of young people. He also believed that you cannot make people good by Act of Parliament. Yapp suggested that any ideas about prohibition would not get past the English press, and that the press believed that 'the people of America are longing to get this thing [Prohibition] of their shoulders.' (93)



The traditional temperance advocates maintained their position on prohibition yet seemed resigned to the unlikelihood of its implementation. Weeks perhaps enjoyed the opportunity to assault the trade yet it is doubtful whether the Commission was impressed. Leif Jones fell back on the long term education project yet refused to have anything to do with more direct measures which fell short of full local prohibition. On the other hand many more temperance advocates were prepared to accept moderate measures. The Commission accepted the dangers to health from habitual insobriety and believed that the influence of immoderate drinking aggravated a variety of social evils such as poverty, bad housing and neglect of children. (94) It did not accept the contention that the questions relating to the sale of intoxicating beverages were especially suited to local decision by popular vote. (95) The attitude seems to be captured by the Police witnesses. If a drinker was a nuisance neither to himself or his fellows, then there just wasn't a problem, and the number of cases was manifestly declining.

### Conclusion

In a statement on the Royal Commission Report, the UKA did join forces with others in the Temperance Movement, when the call was made for 'the people to be educated so that they may make an end to the liquor traffic by the influence of their personal habits and by their political power. (96) In the opinion of the UKA however, despite any qualities that the Royal Commission may have possessed, it had bluntly rejected many of the ideas which were held in such high esteem by the Temperance Movement. The Rev H. Carter, who was a member of the Commission, suggested, as did many other witnesses that to enact the UKA ideal of Prohibition would be counter productive as to 'put down drunkenness by putting down the traffic in strong drink was an inadequate proposal.' (97) The failure of the American experiment in prohibition had blunted the enthusiasm of the UKA for it to be introduced into this country. Witnesses like Leif Jones and G. B. Wilson were only lukewarm

in their commitment to prohibition, acknowledging that it could only be achieved by the will of the people. Temperance witnesses continued to argue for the introduction of Local Veto, but this was considered a non-starter by the Commission. In its response to the Final Report the UKA believed that its main appeal was to those who wished to see, as a permanent feature of the social landscape, the sale of intoxicants. The UKA declared its total lack of confidence in the majority of the Royal Commission personnel, pointing out that it had never asked for a Royal Commission in the first place. The UKA suggested that the recommendations of the Report made no attempt to get to the real root of the drink problem, believing that 'most of the temperance societies in the country look forward to the day when then drink traffic will be swept out of the country.' (98) With that they retreated into themselves. The Temperance Council of the Christian Churches, however, were sympathetic to the general tones of the Commissions conclusions. The Council declared that they were of the opinion that the scientific evidence, respecting the nature and effect of alcohol, and the social and economic factors of the contemporary national drink problem were 'investigated with care and skill.' The Council however, did not accept the Commission's rejection of the use of the popular vote for determining the sale of intoxicating liquor in localities, and it did not accept the unqualified statement of the majority of the Commissioners that Sunday closing would not be acceptable to the general public in England. The Council also believed that the Commission's valuable legislative and educational recommendations which rested (as regards England) on the signatures of no less than sixteen out of the nineteen Royal Commissioners was extremely important. It gave, suggested the Council, a mandate for Parliament to turn the progressive recommendations of the Royal Commission into law. (99) This moderate response was, unwittingly perhaps, echoed by Weeks who suggested that:

Through one cause and another, coupled with the driving force of the temperance organisations, we have seen vulgar and criminal drunkenness materially reduced, much of the more sordid drink-caused poverty and misery has disappeared, drink-caused cruelty to children and animals has been greatly decreased, certain crimes (intimately associated with drink) against morals have diminished, whilst the general level of life has been materially and, we believe, permanently raised. (100)

The simplicity of the phrase 'through one cause and another' calls into question the true dilemma that has always faced the Temperance Movement's *raison d'être*. It is understandable that Weeks should emphasise the Temperance Movement's ability to act as a 'driving force' for change, but throughout its history that ability has always been difficult to measure. In its long campaign the Temperance Movement had always relied upon the belief that many of the problems affecting society were drink related. Dramatic falls in the levels of consumption and drunkenness, increases in other forms of leisure pursuits, improvements in living standards and the falsehood of drink being the main cause of poverty and crime, all contributed to the erosion of the Temperance Movement's ability to effect change. The Royal Commissions Final Report did offer some comfort to the Movement when it concluded that 'the health of the individual would suffer from habitual insobriety.' The Royal Commission also accepted, in principle, that the influence of immoderate drinking ... 'aggravated a variety of social evils, such as poverty, bad housing, neglect of children, matrimonial troubles, prostitution and certain forms of crime.' It concluded however, that it may 'sometimes prove difficult in tracing such a connection, to distinguish cause and effect.' (101)

Similarly, influenced both by the falls in alcoholic consumption and drunkenness and by pressure from the clubs, Labour in the 1920s was ceasing to have much of a temperance policy. Labour did not cease to have keen advocates amongst its Free Church Labour MP's, who played a prominent part in the opposition to any further liberalisation of the licensing legislation. In the budget of the same year Snowden as Chancellor significantly raised the

duty on, and thus the selling price of beer. (102) The deliberations of the Royal Commission on Licensing meanwhile seem to have inspired the founding of the Worker's Temperance League (WTL) in 1931. (103) Its foundation perhaps also reflected the increasingly marginal place temperance had within the labour movement as a whole. The improved public house, and the failing of Prohibition in the USA, made this issue appear both less urgent and less susceptible of legislative solution. As a pressure group within the party it therefore had little success in persuading Labour to adopt, 'a legislative programme which shall include the Temperance Recommendations in the RC on Licensing.' (104) By the early 1930s the Labour movement had in fact come to terms with the drink question. This fact, the division and demise of the Liberals, and the electoral dominance of the National government, all contributed to a lessening of temperance legislative initiatives in the 1930s and the coalition government took no action over the recommendations of the 1929-1931 Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission had observed that:

We have found a remarkable consensus in favour of restriction ... we think that a vast section of the public, including public house clients, the present scheme is acceptable and is becoming more so, not less so. That such is the case is in our opinion vital. (105)

Licensing Laws and the regulations of drink had come to reflect the vast majority of public opinion. While drink did not cease to be a social issue it was no longer a great evil; the drink debate had closed.

## Notes

- (1) For further information on the statistics of drink see Weeks, Rev. C. A Survey of the Position Concerning Alcohol in England and Wales 1909-1934. (nd) Carter, H. Control of the Drink Trade 1915-1918. (London 1919) Wilson, G. B. Alcohol and the Nation (1940)
- (2) Weeks, 'A Survey,' and Carter, 'Control.'
- (3) Harrison, B. Drink and the Victorians. (London 1971) p.387.
- (4) Statement on the Report of the Royal Commission 1932 by the UKA. *Alliance News*. June 1932.
- (5) 'Statement.'
- (6) Jones, S. G. 'Labour and Society and the Drink Question in Britain 1918-1939.' *The Historical Journal* 30, 1. (1987) pp.106-107.
- (7) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.106.
- (8) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.114.
- (9) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p. 107.
- (10) *The Times*, 18 November 1919 in Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p. 108.
- (11) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.109.
- (12) *Daily Herald*, 2 March 1920, in Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.110.
- (13) *Bately News*, 29 September 1923, in Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.111.
- (14) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' pp.112-113.
- (15) Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1920 pp.180-1.
- (16) *Manchester Guardian*, 12 March, *Daily Herald*, 15 March 1920, *Forward* 20

March 1920 in Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.115.

- (17) Alliance Year Book 1921 p.67.
- (18) *Barnsley Chronicle*, 3 February 1923 in Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.108.
- (19) Sharp, J. A. Economic Aspects of the Liquor Trade. (London 1922) p.40.
- (20) Stamp, J. A. 'The Economic Aspects of Temperance.'(1941) in Weir, R. B. Obsessed With Moderation: The Drink Trades and the Drink Question. (1870-1930) *British Journal of Addiction*. 79 (1984) 93-107. p.12.
- (21) Sharp, J. A. 'Economic Aspects.' p.12.
- (22) Rowntree, J. and Sherwell, A. The Temperance Problem and Social Reform. (London 1900) p.28.
- (23) Sharp, J. A. 'Economic Aspects.' p.47.
- (24) Catterall, P. The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales. PhD Thesis. University of London. (1989) p.359.
- (25) *Sussex Daily News*. 24 June 1921.
- (26) Labour and the Liquor Trade Report. (1926) p.6. in Catterall, 'The Free Churches.' p. 359.
- (27) *Brotherhood Journal*. November 1919.
- (28) *Methodist Times*. 23 February 1920.
- (29) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.119.
- (30) Catterall, P. 'The Free Churches.' p.363.
- (31) Thomas, G. The Church Heritage in Politics (London, 1959) p.59.
- (32) NEC minutes, 26 March 1929.
- (33) Catterall, P. 'The Free Churches.' p.49.
- (34) *Alliance News*, May 1924, *Methodist Times* 23 October 1924.

- (35) *The Workers Union Record*, February 1926 in Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.120.
- (36) Jones, 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question.' p.120
- (37) *Alliance News*, June 1929.
- (38) Labour Party Annual Conference Report 1928.
- (39) Weeks, Rev C.C. A Survey of the Position Concerning Alcohol in England and Wales with Special Reference to the Period 1909-1934. pp.4-5.
- (40) Weeks, 'A Survey.' p.6.
- (41) Royal Commission Final Report. XX11 p.70.
- (42) Final Report. XX11. p.70.
- (43) Final Report. XX11. p.70.
- (44) Amulree Commission,. Ans. 11523.
- (45) Amulree Commission. Evidence from Sir J. C .G. Sykes on behalf of the Home Office. p.1001, Par. 20, ans. 19 and 20.
- (46) Amulree Commission. Evidence from Sir E. Sanders, Par.4.
- (47) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,051.
- (48) Amulree Commission. Ans. 20,844.
- (49) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,684.
- (50) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,587-8.
- (51) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,645.
- (52) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,647.
- (53) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,651.
- (54) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21, 657.
- (55) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,661.
- (56) Amulree Commission. Ans. 21,676.

- (57) Hayler, M. C. The Vision of the Century 1853-1953. The UKA in Historical Retrospect p.128.
- (58) Amulree Commission. Ans. 22,005.
- (59) Amulree Commission. Ans. 22,105.
- (60) Amulree Commission. Ans. 22,108.
- (61) Amulree Commission. Ans. 22,184.
- (62) Amulree Commission. ans. 22,504.
- (63) Snowden, P. Socialism and the Drink Question. (London 1908) p.106.
- (64) Amulree Commission. Ans. 25,807.
- (65) Amulree Commission. Ans. 25,850.
- (66) Amulree Commission. Ans. 25,811.
- (67) Amulree Commission. Ans. 24,746.
- (68) Amulree Commission. Ans. 24,848.
- (69) Amulree Commission. Ans. 24,877.
- (70) Amulree Commission. Ans. 24,879.
- (71) Amulree Commission. Ans. 25,028.
- (72) Amulree Commission. Ans. 25,034.
- (73) Amulree Commission. ans. 27,884.
- (74) Amulree Commission. Ans. 27,926.
- (75) Amulree Commission. p.1541.
- (76) Amulree Commission. Ans. 27,884-6.
- (77) Amulree Commission. p.1644.
- (78) Amulree Commission. Ans. 27,883-4.
- (79) Amulree Commission. p.1644.
- (80) Amulree Commission. p.1644.



- (81) Amulree Commission. p.1649.
- (82) Longmate, N. The Water Drinkers: A History of Temperance. (1968) p.278.
- (83) *Bristol Times and Mirror*, cited in Amulree Commission. p.1652.
- (84) Amulree Commission. p.1652.
- (85) Amulree Commission. p.1653.
- (86) Amulree Commission. Ans. 29,539.
- (87) Amulree Commission. RC. p.1657.
- (88) Amulree Commission. p.2051.
- (89) Amulree Commission. p.2052.
- (90) Amulree Commission. p.2052.
- (91) Amulree Commission. Ans. 24,885.
- (92) Amulree Commission. Ans. 35,526-8.
- (93) Amulree Commission. Ans. 35,387.
- (94) Amulree Commission Final Report. 8 January 1932. Para.87.
- (95) Report. Para 445.
- (96) *Alliance News*, June 1932.
- (97) Carter, H. The English Temperance Movement 1830-1899. (1933)
- (98) *Alliance News*, June 1932.
- (99) Statement on the Final Report of the Amulree Commission. 1932, published by the Temperance Council of Christian Churches, January 1932.
- (100) Weeks, 'A survey.' p.1.
- (101) Amulree Commission Final Report. Para.87.
- (102) Wilson, G. B. Alcohol and the Nation. (1940) p.142.
- (103) *Alliance News*, July 1932, July 1939.
- (104) *Alliance News*, July 1932.

(105) Amulree Commission Final Report. p.105-6.

## Conclusion.

This study has explored the activities of the Temperance Movement between 1895 and 1933 as it sought to 'abolish the drink evil.' (1) From its early nineteenth century beginnings, temperance campaigners attempted to persuade through moral suasion, but with the inception of the radical UKA and its approach through prohibition, divisions were created within the Temperance Movement and doubt as to how the prime objective could be achieved. This basic division and the further fragmentation of temperance advocates into many sects and societies, prevented the Movement from presenting a united front in the continuing discussion on drink. As the principal demand of prohibition was repeatedly rejected, yet could not be abandoned, the Movement became increasingly introspective and marginalised from the debate in which it thought it had most to say. In the conclusion, I shall review the main features of the study, highlighting some of the central issues and areas where further research would be helpful, especially in relations to US Prohibition and the role of the Labour Party.

The Liberal Party had been convinced that its support for Local Veto was a vote winner, and it entered the 1895 general election pledged to its enactment. The crushing defeat of the Liberals at the election came as a bitter blow to the more radical temperance reformers and, according to Dingle, marked the end of the UKA's hegemony in the Temperance Movement. (2) There is much justification in this statement as the Liberal Party renounced the Veto as a political pledge and comments by many leading liberals at the time justify the reasons and the action. It did not stop the UKA from continually pursuing its prohibition propaganda but it was clear that any hope of prohibition enactment was dead in the water. Since 1864 many Direct Veto bills had appeared before Parliament but they failed at second reading. Each time the UKA supposed that this was a temporary political setback and carried on as before. The

1895 defeat was different as it was a public test of prohibition but the UKA still assumed that its position was recoverable. Such recovery was deemed likely as the UKA assumed that it could still count on support from leading members of the Liberal Party. What they seemed unable to grasp after 1895 was the realisation that fundamental changes had eroded the foundations on which its political effectiveness was based. Despite being inward looking, it would have proved difficult for the UKA to surrender its immovable position on prohibition as it did not believe in licensing at all.

The announcement of the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the licensing laws in 1896 gave the Temperance Movement and the UKA an ideal, albeit unexpected forum in which to plead their case. The fact that the Commission found it necessary to publish a Majority Report and a Minority Report is proof that solutions to the drink question were not clear cut. The Temperance Movement found some consolation in the Minority Report, but it did not result in any actual temperance legislation. Prohibition, however, was only the most extreme of many possible approaches and the public decline in its popularity as a solution should not be construed as a diminishing concern about the drink question, but rather as an increasing awareness of its complexity. In many ways the Peel Commission took a very traditional approach towards the drink question; its members divided along political lines when it came to decisions on the Veto and compensation. After 1895 even the Liberal Party, consistently the party most favourable to temperance causes, approached the drink question with great caution: the Temperance Movement appeared too fragmented; the Trade too strong and electoral opinion uncertain. (3)

Between 1830 and 1900, Parliament had addressed the liquor question on innumerable occasions but with only limited effect. The elections of 1900 and 1904 went in favour of the Conservatives and in 1904 the Conservative Party finally succeeded in the implementation of a Licensing Act which had as its main component compensation, apparently a temperance

measure but one which struck at the heart of the Temperance Movement. The Act aimed to compensate those licensees whose licences had been revoked by zealous magistrates intent on reducing the number of licences and hence the number of pubs. The Conservatives claimed that the closure of so many superfluous establishments was conducive to social order and was therefore a temperance measure. Brewers surrendered licences quite willingly on those public houses with poor accommodation and poor trading returns and were compensated for doing so. It is small wonder that the Trade found itself even more indebted to the Conservatives and a Temperance Movement seething with resentment. At the beginning of the twentieth century the study shows a Temperance Movement hopelessly divided with a depleted membership but, ironically, coupled with falling levels in reported cases of drunkenness and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Whilst the Temperance Movement applauded the decreasing levels of drink associated problems, it nevertheless left them embarrassed and undecided on their next plan of action.

Their uncertain position was further demonstrated during the First World War. The outbreak of war in 1914 witnessed the introduction of the DORA and with it draconian licensing legislation but in 1921, the enactment of a licensing act designed to restore many pre-war liberties. During the hostilities the Temperance Movement had persistently promoted the merits of prohibition and in petitions and carefully worded propaganda sought its enactment. After the war the Movement demanded that there be a careful consideration before any return to a pre-war situation was contemplated. By 1919, however, the drink control measures that had been put in place had achieved apparently miraculous results and the demand for prohibition became muted. Exacerbating the decline of the Movement's aims and ambitions was the effect of a changing political scene, which began to witness the slow demise of the Liberal Party, and the emergence of an electable Labour Party.

This was not so in the United States where the performance of the Anti-Saloon League in getting full prohibition enacted for thirteen years is the ideal example of a pressure group success; that it failed to stop drinking is another story altogether. Further comparative research, expanding on the reasons for the success of the League and the failure of the Temperance Movement would prove illuminating. That the USA decided on a denial approach rather than a controlled one is certainly the major difference between the two. The DORA, introduced during the First World War, contained some measure of denial but the perception of the time that the prosecution of the war was being jeopardised by drink demanded draconian rather than prohibitive action. Total prohibition was considered but ruled out as being out of proportion to the objectives, and studies conducted after the implementation of the DORA support the view that many employers, particularly those in the ship building and ship repair industries had over-stated the industrial problems caused through drink. Those solutions of a more moderate nature, like the uniform restriction of facilities, the substitution of light for heavy alcoholic liquors, and, to some degree, the Carlisle experiment, all proved their worth. Excessive drinking was checked, and the disability caused by it proportionally reduced, which allowed sufficient liberty to avoid a widespread revolt against the law or a resort to wholesale evasion. Drunkenness and alcoholic consumption never returned to pre-war levels and this success can be attributed largely to alternative leisure pursuits, shorter hours and the levels of taxation. There is however doubt as to the efficacy of state ownership and control, the reduction of licensed houses, alteration of premises, disinterested management and supply of food failed to exert any perceptible influence on sobriety and public order. What the Carlisle experiment did do however was to raise the status and function of the public house from a mere drinking bar to a place of family refreshment. Although this failed to appeal to the generation used to smoke filled snugs, it began to appeal to a new generation and in doing so may be seen as real

temperance, natural not forced and therefore lasting (4) All this placed the Temperance Movement in a difficult position as drink policy passed them by.

The end of war time restrictions and the enactment of the 1921 Licensing Act severely tested the Temperance Movement's ambitions as it continued to offer solutions to the drink problem. The study has shown that the Temperance Movement had tended to move away from its reliance on moral suasion and to rely upon education and legislation. Classical reasons for abstinence such as poverty and physical well being had been proved unsustainable and had robbed moral suasionists of their pivotal arguments. At the same time falling temperance memberships coupled with a religious fallout meant fewer disciples to convey this abstinence message. Temperance moderates fully understood the need for compromise and continuously pursued a set of moral and educational objectives which included legislative reform. The setting up of institutions such as the Police Court Missions and the educational programmes of the many Bands of Hope are prime examples. Many hard line prohibitionists accepted that prohibition could not be implemented without legislation and continually lobbied for changes to the law but were unsuccessful. Prohibition, whether local or national, demanded legislation but, even hard line prohibitionists seemed to recognise that the chances of getting it implemented were negligible. Consequently they began to pull back on a public education argument, although they were hardly enthusiastic about, indeed it must have been a dispiriting position to have to resort to a long term grass roots campaign which had already failed in more propitious circumstances. The great Achilles' heel to any radical temperance programme was moderate drinking and it is possible that many prohibitionists had realised this and knew that legislation was the only answer.

With the demise of the Liberal Party, a Conservative Party still sympathetic to the Trade, how could temperance achieve political support? It could not sponsor Parliamentary candidates, so it had to rely upon an amicable Labour Party. The symbiotic relationship that

the Trade had with the Conservative Party should have perhaps acted as a spur to the Labour Party, as it continually campaigned against Tory action, no matter how tenuous. Socialists however had rejected the Victorian analysis of the relationship between drink and poverty, attributing poverty to the economic system of capitalism. In the early 1920s, the Labour Party's advisory committee on temperance policy recommended that the party 'actively pursue' a policy of state purchase. The powerful Working Men's Club and Institute Union (CIU) opposed public ownership and the temperance ideas of many socialists. In June 1920 however, the Labour Party declared in favour of Local Veto. The issue of drink was still therefore 'politically sensitive, socially significant and unlikely to disappear from the forefront of controversy overnight.' (5) In 1923 the Labour Party produced a Report in which it suggested that a new approach was needed to resolve the temperance debate. (6) What the Report didn't say was how this was to be accomplished. Growth in trade unionism at both national and local level strengthened class confidence which may well have affected changes in temperance attitudes. This may have been brought about by the necessity of many unions to hold branch meetings in public houses. Equally a confident and pragmatic Labour Party also recognised the pitfalls waiting for the organisation which was able to declare a solution to the drink question. The Labour Party knew that it had to tread carefully when it came to discussing the fate of the public house as it did not want to alienate its supporters or promote mass indifference to temperance. This stop and go policy shows the complexity of the issues involved and a full explanation of Labour's true position towards temperance has proved difficult. What is fairly conclusive is that the Labour Party was uncertain as to the best course of temperance action and left it to a Royal Commission to decide for them. By the time the Commission reported, Labour no longer held office.

In spite of having high profile witnesses, like the influential Lord Astor, to plead its case and proclaim the virtues of temperance before the Amulree Commission, the Temperance



Movement, once again, failed to convey a coherent and comprehensive temperance strategy. In 1933 there was an agreed temperance programme which proclaimed a unity of action within the Temperance Movement and a published manifesto called for a 'programme of educational and legislative reform' which became known as the Twelve Point Plan. (7) It was the Movement's comprehensive response to the Amulree Commission and marked the end of effective action for temperance reform since none of the Twelve Points were achieved nor, it seems, did the Movement expect them to be. The Temperance Movement had become skilled in the art of non-persuasion and should perhaps have heeded the advice of William Black of the UKA who was frequently quoted as saying that the right policy for the Temperance Movement to adopt in respect of legislation was 'to ask for what we want and take what we can get.' And they did not do that. Balfour's 1904 Licensing Act giving statutory right to compensation - the only licensing bill enacted between 1872 and 1921 became law despite the opposition of virtually the entire Temperance Movement. Alcohol has been the subject of controversy virtually throughout the whole of history and the fragile fabric of English society was deemed under threat from it at the beginning of the 1830's. Joseph Livesey became convinced that the solution to the drink question was through moral suasion but radical prohibitionists had other ideas. Neither of these two approaches could claim success as they never came near achieving the prime objective. It has to be concluded that throughout its history the Temperance Movement demanded much, received very little and was therefore not so much a force but an irritant.

## Notes

- (1) Carter, H. The English Temperance Movement: A Study in Objectives. Vol. 1. The Formative Period. 1830-1899. (1933) p.247.
- (2) Dingle, A E. The Campaign for Prohibition in Victorian England. The United Kingdom Alliance 1872-1895. (1980)
- (3) Fahey, D. 'The Politics of Drink: Pressure Groups and the British Liberal Party, 1883-1908.' *Social Sciences For Spring 1979*. pp.76-85.
- (4) Shadwell, A. Drink in 1914-1922. A Lesson in Control. (1923) p.154.
- (5) Jones, S. G. 'Labour, Society and the Drink Question in Britain, 1918-1939.' *The Historical Journal*, 30, 1 (1997) p.114-5
- (6) Labour Party. *Labour and the Liquor Trade Report* (1923)
- (7) Williams, G.B. & Brake, G. T. Drink in Great Britain 1900-1979 (1980) pp.128-9.

## Appendix 1

### Table of Dates.

1830. Beerhouse Act. 'Free Trade in Beer' began. First temperance societies founded in England, with a pledge of abstinence from spirituous liquors, and of moderation in the use of malted liquors.
1832. 'Entire Abstinence' Pledge drawn up by Joseph Livesey and signed by the Preston seven.
- 1833 Livesey and his colleagues heralded 'The Reform' beyond Preston.
- 1834 Parliamentary Select Committee on Intemperance Reported.
- 1836 Thomas Whittaker and James Tears set out from Presto as missionaries for 'The Reform.'
- 1839 Sunday morning closing of public houses in London. This reform was achieved by a clause in the Metropolitan Police Act
- 1842-8 Sunday morning closing extended throughout England.
- 1849-50 House of Lords Committee on Intemperance reported.
- 1851 A drastic Prohibition law passed in the State of Maine, USA.
- 1853 Formation of the UKA.
- 1854 House of Commons Select Committee on public houses reported,
- 1860 New wine Licence (grocer's licence) created by Gladstone.
- 1862 Permissive Bill Resolution first moved in the Commons by W Lawson MP  
Publication of Livesey's *Free and Friendly Remarks Upon the Permissive Bill*.  
Publication of *Vindication of the Principles and Policy of the UKA*.
- 1869 Wine and Beerhouse Act: 'Free Trade in Beer' ended.
- 1869 Convocation of Canterbury Report on Intemperance presented.

- 1871 H A Bruce, Home Secretary, introduced a comprehensive Licensing Bill. The Bill was withdrawn
- 1872 Licensing Act incorporating the 'regulative' provisions of the 1871 Bill.  
UKA resolved on 'direct action' in the constituencies.
- 1874 Licensing Act, amending the Act of 1872,  
Convocation of York Report on Intemperance presented.
- 1876 Committee on Intemperance appointed by the House of Lords.
- 1880 Local Option resolution carried for the first time in the House of Commons.
- 1888 C. T. Ritchie, President of Local Government Board proposed to transfer liquor licensing to County Councils, and to empower them to pay compensation for redundant licenses. Proposal withdrawn.
- 1889 National Liberal Federation at Manchester endorsed the 'Direct Popular Veto.'
- 1890 G. J. Goschen, Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed compensation for redundant licences. Proposal withdrawn.
- 1891 House of Lords judgement in Sharp versus Wakefield.
- 1893 Sir W Harcourt introduced Local Veto Bill in the Commons. The Bill made no progress.
- 1895 Local Veto Bill reintroduced. The Bill made no progress.  
Heavy defeat of the Liberal Party at the general election.
- 1896 Royal Commission on Licensing Laws appointed.
- 1899 Royal Commission reported.
- 1904 Licensing Act
- 1914-21 Social Control. Defence of the Realm Act. Carlisle Experiment.
- 1921 The Liquor Licensing Act.

- 1924 Finance Act.
- 1929 Royal Commission on Licensing Laws appointed.
- 1931 Royal Commission reported.
- 1933 Finance Act. This Act radically changed the method of charging beer duty.

Compiled From.

- Carter, H. The English Temperance Movement: A Study in Objectives. (1933)  
p.249-250
- Wilson, G Alcohol and the Nation (1940) pp. 314-317.

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