

## THE ROOTS OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM IN THE CAPE COLONY: TEMPERANCE. 1866-1898

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In the political histories of the Cape Colony, the temperance movement has not received the attention that it deserves. The proposals for a "brandy tax" and various attempts to restrict the sale of liquor (for example, proclaimed areas, local option, and prohibition in the Transkei) had brought the Afrikaner Bond into existence in opposition in the late 1870s; the desire to scuttle such measures remained a major preoccupation of the Bond. While the temperance forces never achieved the political coherence or "party" organization of their opponents in the Afrikaner Bond, the temperance issue did unite more factions among the English-speaking voters and politicians than any issue prior to Jameson's Raid. In practice the main battleground was that of prohibition to "natives" or to "the coloured classes"; various motives of paternalism and self-interest brought together missionaries and churchmen, settlers and employers, the political "friends of the natives," and government officials.

Among Africans too, temperance was an important, even burning, issue. It involved opposition to the consumption not only of the more potent European wines and liquors (especially brandy) but also of the mildly alcoholic, traditional *utywala* ("Kaffir beer").<sup>1</sup> The harmful effects of brandy were readily obvious. There was virtual unanimity among African witnesses appearing before both the Native Laws and Customs Commission (1881-1883)<sup>2</sup> and the

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Liquor Laws Commission (1889-1890);<sup>3</sup> not only Christians but many who identified themselves as heathen or "reds" repeated the refrain, "Our people are being destroyed by drink." They frequently requested total prohibition on the sale of brandy to Africans or at least a severe restriction on the number and terms of canteen licenses issued near or in African territories and reserves. In addition to urging voluntary abstinence, opposition to liquor involved attempts to achieve legal restraints. This involved a great deal of political and legal activity (petitions to parliament, making temperance an issue in elections,

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<sup>1</sup> There were in fact two kinds of traditional beer made from a fermented gruel of ground grain (usually mealies). *Utywala* was the real beer, the use of homemade malt preparation increased the alcoholic content somewhat, but that content still remained very low,. *Amarewu* was made from a thin porridge without any malting substance and thus had an even lower alcoholic content. John Henderson Soga describes the processes of preparation in *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (London, 1939), 399-402.

<sup>2</sup> See Cape of Good Hope, *The Report and Proceedings with Appendices of the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs* [G.4-83] (Struik Reprint, 1968). [Hereafter, *Native Laws Commission*.]

<sup>3</sup> See Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Liquor Laws Commission, 1889-1890* [G.I. – '90] (Cape Town, 1890). [Hereafter, *Liquor Laws Commission*.]

interventions against the issuing or reissuing of canteen licenses) on an almost continual basis from the 1870s, frequently in consort with the white temperance forces. This phase of the temperance campaign was straightforward and commanded widespread support; not only were the debilitating effects of European liquors obvious, but the thing itself was a foreign, an intrusive evil. *Utywala*, on the other hand, was a very different matter.

Nevertheless, the long campaign against *utywala*, which began in the 1860s and continues to the present, stands as a relative success at least when compared with the campaigns launched against many other traditional customs. An interesting measure of that success is found in G. C. Oosthuizen's survey conducted in the 1960s among non-Christian Africans in the Cape. The survey recorded their impressions of church rules.

The non-Christians are sure that the following practices are accepted by the churches namely *lobola* (98 per cent); *ukwaluka* (circumcision, 98.59 per cent) while about 25 per cent were sure that *intonjani* (female puberty rites) are accepted. Only a few informants stated that the church accepts *ukumetsha* (pre-marital love play). They are certain that *umngcwabo* (funeral practices) and *isi-susa so-tywala* (beer drinking ceremony) are rejected outright by the church.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, by the beginning of the twentieth century, most churches and missionaries had abandoned their earlier, hysterical opposition to *lobola* and *ukwaluka* and were willing to permit their practice under certain conditions. *Intonjane* has largely disappeared (even among "reds"), but most of the essentials of *intonjane* seem to have been mixed with western aspects in the "school" marriage

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ceremonies practiced by African Christians.<sup>5</sup> Even in regard to funeral practices, B. A. Pauw has found recently that under the thinly disguised form of the "unveiling the tombstone" ceremonies, most of the essentials of traditional funeral practices are being revived and practiced by African Christians.<sup>6</sup> It is only the campaign against *utywala* which has achieved a measure of success.

Unlike the vigorous campaigns against other traditional customs, the attack on *utywala* did not emanate primarily from the white missionaries. Just as in the case of slaughtering an ox for a feast, there were ritual functions and significance in some uses of beer. Both were frequently done in connection with a particular occasion (initiation rites, marriage, or recovery from illness) and with both it was understood that the ancestors would be pleased. But in many cases, this ritual aspect could be implicit rather than explicit.<sup>7</sup> Because

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<sup>4</sup> "Attitudes towards Christian Churches in the Ciskei," *African Studies*, XXV, 2 (1996), 86.

<sup>5</sup> The missionary campaigns against these customs and their results are described in detail in Wallace Mills, "The Role of African Clergy in the Reorientation of Xhosa Society to the Plural Society in the Cape Colony, 1850-1915" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1975).

<sup>6</sup> *Christianity and Xhosa Tradition* (Oxford, 1975).

<sup>7</sup> Monica Hunter Wilson notes several ritual aspects in *Reaction to Conquest*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford, 1961). However, in *The Ama-Xosa*, Soga mentions only one in the case of mollifying the ancestors during a family illness.

they were so intermixed with and overshadowed by the social aspects, these ritual aspects apparently passed unnoticed in the nineteenth century, and *utywala* was not condemned on religious grounds.

However, *utywala* was a "community food"; that is, it was seldom made for domestic use and it was intended to be shared. The brewing of beer was taken by all and sundry as a standing invitation to attend the celebration three or four days hence when the brew was ready. It was in fact primarily the social function, the "beer drink," to which missionaries took exception. The "beer drink" brought Christian and heathen together, usually in celebration of "heathen" customs and accompanied by "immoral" dances and practices. "Beer drinks" continued until all beer was consumed and often lasted for more than one day. The combination of alcohol and convivial social atmosphere tended to break down the inhibitions and behavior patterns the missionaries were attempting to instill, especially the idea of separation, as convention decreed that anyone could attend a "beer drink" and no exclusiveness was possible. Thus, "beer drinks" tended to nullify much that the missionaries were attempting to do. As a result, all mission bodies insisted

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that members must not organize or attend any "beer drink."<sup>8</sup>

The attempt to pressure African Christians into total abstinence from consumption of beer was launched among the Wesleyan Methodists in 1866 in conjunction with the "Taylor revival."<sup>9</sup> Although some white missionaries may have been attempting such a campaign earlier,<sup>10</sup> it was Charles Pamla's fervid advocacy (an advocacy that was soon taken up by his fellow African clergymen and evangelists) which made it a viable proposition. His efforts aroused strong hostility, as he recalled in 1902:

You will remember the great persecution, I suffered for having opposed the drinking of the native Churches their own beer & which rule now has been the saving of our Native members from drunkenness [sic] right through the Wesleyan members of South Africa.<sup>11</sup>

As early as 1866, Robert Lamplough prematurely claimed that the use of beer was being abandoned.<sup>12</sup> Peter Hargreaves was happily recording "successes" during 1870.<sup>13</sup> In 1873,

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<sup>8</sup> Another aspect was that all such gatherings were accompanied by a certain amount of stick-fighting among the young men. These could occasionally develop into much more serious affrays (the 1877-1878 war is perhaps the most extreme example), and deaths from injuries were not unusual. However, this objection was raised more frequently by Africans, "reds" as well as Christians, than by white missionaries.

<sup>9</sup> This revival and its significance is discussed in Wallace Mills "The Taylor Revival of 1866 and the Roots of African Nationalism in the Cape Colony," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, VIII, 2 (1976), 105-122. This revival owed much more to African clergymen, such as Charles Pamla, than it did to William "California" Taylor.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Lamplough (principal of Headtown Institution and Pamla's circuit superintendent) claimed that he had been working hard at it for five years. See *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, XIII (25 October 1866), 171.

<sup>11</sup> Pamla to Robert Lamplough, 23 December 1902, MS 15, 707, Methodist Archives, Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa [hereafter, Methodist Archives].

<sup>12</sup> *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, XIII (25 October 1866), 171.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Hargreaves, *Diaries*, deposited in Methodist Book Room, Cape Town.

William C. Holden implied that total abstinence was the rule in Queenstown District,<sup>14</sup> but this was not the case. The last of the triennial meetings of district chairmen,<sup>15</sup> held about 1879, recommended that total abstinence be made a rule for Africans. However, when this recommendation was read at the 1881 Queenstown Native District meeting, the lack of agreement led the meeting to defer the issue for a year.<sup>16</sup> The 1881 Grahamstown Native District meeting responded

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with a self-congratulatory assertion that consumption of beer was practically nonexistent among its members already.<sup>17</sup> However; the following year it was admitted that some circuits "have allowed the drinking of this beverage to some extent." The meeting then urged that the newly formed South African Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church should "frame a regulation prohibiting the use of Kafir beer."<sup>18</sup>

While the general issue of temperance was raised at the 1883 conference and the formation of temperance societies and Band of Hope branches was recommended in each circuit, no rule was formulated regarding "Kaffir beer." In the 1885 Queenstown Native District meeting, a resolution "that *total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks* be made a *condition of Church Membership* in all our Native Circuits" was passed only with the barest majority (seven to six).<sup>19</sup> In 1886 the Rev. J. A. Chalker was writing to the district chairman, Rev. Mason, about the dissension in Port Elizabeth regarding "a concoction known as Hop Beer."<sup>20</sup> Chalker claimed that some of the class leaders made, drank and sold the beverage. A special leaders' meeting had decided by a large majority (14 to 3) that "Hop Beer" was in the category of "spiritous liquors" and therefore prohibited to Wesleyans, but Chalker expected the "Hop Beer Party" to continue to contest this ruling.<sup>21</sup>

In 1889 under questioning by Bond leader Hofmeyr, the Rev. J. Smith Spencer (president of the Wesleyan Conference that year) stated that "amongst the native people under our control total abstinence is almost universal" and "an accepted condition of membership"; however, he admitted that it had not been established as a law of membership by Conference.

As European ministers we have hesitated to impose a law upon our native people which

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<sup>14</sup> See Holden's *British Rule in South Africa* (Pretoria, 1969), 26-27.

<sup>15</sup> These meetings (a total of three were held) were a prelude to the formation of the South African Conference in 1883.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Queenstown Native District Meeting (1881), MS 15, 192, Methodist Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Grahamstown Native District Meeting (1881), Question 26, MS 15, 018, Methodist Archives.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* (1882), Supplementary Minutes II.

<sup>19</sup> Minutes of the Queenstown Native District Meeting (1885), 433, MS 15, 192, Methodist Archives.

<sup>20</sup> I did not find any description of the manufacture of "hop beer," but it probably differed from *utywala* by using one or more store-bought ingredients. The difficulty in handling the problem probably arose from the fact that as an innovation, it did not have the "open house" aspect of *utywala* and did not, therefore, automatically provoke a "beer-drink." It could be made and consumed privately like *amarewu*.

<sup>21</sup> Chalker to F. Mason, 9 November 1886, Mason Papers, MS 15, 120, Methodist Archives. This crisis had been initiated by the zeal of Samuel Ntsiko rather than by Chalker.

we could not see our way clear to enact and enforce all round; but there is, on the part of the natives themselves, a very strong, and I think universal desire that total abstinence from all

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intoxicating drinks, including Kaffir beer, should be for them a condition of membership.<sup>22</sup>

Eventually, abstinence from *utywala* was virtually declared a prerequisite.<sup>23</sup>

Other mission bodies felt even more inhibited in attacking the use of *utywala*. The Moravian missionary, Rev. Otto Padel, explained why his church did not forbid its use. "They cannot afford to drink coffee and tea, and we don't believe in always drinking water, so we thought it better to allow Kaffir beer to some extent, and under certain rules."<sup>24</sup> The L.M.S. missionary, Richard Birt, was concerned only when used to excess "for it is often not only drink to them but food."<sup>25</sup>

Rev. Woodrooffe (Anglican) called it "a clumsy intoxicant;"<sup>26</sup> "it is really food to a great many old people whose teeth are failing them; and now sour milk is failing them they have very little else to drink."<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, early in the first decade of the twentieth century, Anglicans launched a campaign to encourage total abstinence, mostly via the Church Temperance Society.<sup>28</sup> They still recognized some difficulty, especially since it was an important

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<sup>22</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 359-360. This must have been an embarrassing admission for Spencer as it was the same argument adduced by Hofmeyr and other antiprohibitionists; that is, prohibition for "natives" only would be "class legislation." Thus, Spencer and other Wesleyan ministers were asking the politicians to do what they had "hesitated" to do themselves - that is, to pass laws which treated whites and blacks differently. However, other Wesleyan ministers appearing before the Commission indicated that though not an official rule of Conference, abstinence was being demanded and enforced. See Minutes of Evidence, Rev. E.J. Barrett, 608-610, and Rev. Thomas Roper, 623-624.

<sup>23</sup> However, the rule stopped somewhat short of being an absolute prohibition. "All members of the Church should consider it a binding to abstain from Kafir Beer both at home and away from home." *Minutes of Conference* (1911), 271. There was hesitation and ambiguity on the part of Wesleyans in Britain throughout much of the nineteenth century. According to Brian Harrison in *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (Pittsburg, 1971), 170, temperance was associated with laicizing tendencies and demands; it was at times resisted by the clergy for that reason. In South Africa there was not the same lay-clergy conflict. The constitution of the South African Conference had, while retaining some matters for the exclusive consideration and decision of the clergy, opened other important matters for joint consideration by laymen and clergy together. Nevertheless, there remained sufficient opposition, whether among the laity or the clergy, to prevent the adoption of temperance as a rule of the Wesleyan church in South Africa.

<sup>24</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 709-710, No. 12106.

<sup>25</sup> *Native Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 212, Nos. 3778-3779.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix C, 102.

<sup>27</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 739, No. 12632. Rev. T.W. Green (Anglican) even recommended that a market be established where *utywala* could be sold. *Native Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 390, No. 7024.

<sup>28</sup> This is very much in line with Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 183. Temperance had been largely a non-conformist movement until the 1860s and 1870s when Anglicans began to take up the issue. However, it was evangelicals rather than high churchmen who pioneered this development. As South Africa was very much a high church preserve, it was some considerable time before the movement reached the Church of the Province of South Africa.

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dietary item. Godfrey Callaway admitted that many European doctors "recommend its use in many of their cases, as an anti-scorbutic." Nevertheless, Callaway declared, because Africans were immoderate in its use, "We require all our evangelists and other church-workers to be total abstainers. And we advise all our catechumens and confirmation candidates to take the same step."<sup>29</sup>

As has been indicated, much of the impetus for the anti-*utywala* campaign came from African clergymen, even to the point of advocating legislative prohibition and abolition. This is especially true of Wesleyans, such as Rev. Samuel Ntsiko who had precipitated the "hop beer" crisis in Port Elizabeth by his crusade. This was shown in his appearance before the Liquor Laws Commission. After saying that beer used to be a good drink, he went on to acquiesce in practically any leading question put to him. He agreed that Africans could not drink in moderation; if they drank at all, they drank to excess. He agreed that beer-drinking led to stock thefts both because beer drinking created "a craving for meat" and because Africans tended to be prodigal with their grain in making beer; then when the grain was exhausted they faced hardship and the need to steal food. Finally, he agreed that beer drinking led to "immoralities."<sup>30</sup> The other argument frequently raised was that "beer drinks" led to much fighting. In general, while not going as far as Ntsiko in accepting some of the more derogatory imputations, Wesleyans spoke most strongly against beer and were the most willing to advocate legislative prohibition, although Rev. Boyce Mama was an exception. He made it clear that he excluded beer from his comments about the evils of drink and the need for prohibition, and he evaded questions about beer.<sup>31</sup>

Rev. Daniel Malgas (Anglican) was pretty much in line with his church; that is, there were some "evils," but most of these were connected with the "beer drink." Thus the "beer drinks" should be prohibited, but there should be no interference with private manufacture and use.<sup>32</sup>

Congregationalist Walter Rubusana seems to have adopted a

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substantially stronger stand than his mentor, Richard Birt (mentioned above). Rubusana declared that "it is a very good thing as an article of food only, but it has been abused by the natives, like all other things, and it is quite time it was taken away from them." He felt that the distinction between gatherings and private use was not practical; "you don't know where to draw a line, because a party soon collects, and in an hour there are five or six

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<sup>29</sup> *Cowley Evangelist* (May 1910), 115-116; see also Rev. Presslie, *Foreign Mission Chronicle*, V, 2 (April 1904), 55-56; Father Puller, *Cowley Evangelist* (November 1908), 251-253.

<sup>30</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 394-395.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 570.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 587.

people in a hut." Therefore, it should be prohibited altogether.<sup>33</sup>

The Presbyterian clergy seemed to treat this subject gingerly. In an 1888 analysis of the effects of urban living (called "Natives in Towns"), Rev. Elijah Makiwane had had a good deal to say about the evils of "Kaffir beer." He claimed that the beer made in Port Elizabeth was much stronger than beer made in the country or in earlier days.<sup>34</sup> He discussed at some length the evils of what are today called "shebeens"<sup>35</sup> in corrupting people, especially young people from the countryside, who do not have the restraining influences of the family.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, before the Liquor Laws Commission in 1889, he backed away from prohibition of beer, although "the selling of Kaffir beer should be prohibited."<sup>37</sup> Rev. Mzimba, while agreeing that beer does "harm" especially at gatherings where fights occur, had no recommendations and stressed that brandy was much worse.<sup>38</sup> The Presbyterian evangelist, Peter Qwela of Pirie, although he readily admitted "evils," was clearly unhappy about discussing "Kaffir beer" and being pressed to take a clear stand.<sup>39</sup> This reserve probably indicates a fairly strong opposition among African Presbyterians to any legislation against beer in either church or state. Perhaps the existence of this opposition helps to account for Makiwane and Mzimba's zeal in promoting voluntary abstinence via the temperance lodge.

An important aspect of the temperance campaign was the development of temperance societies and especially the development of a temperance lodge. In the 1870s, the Independent Order of Good Templars (I.O.G.T.) was being introduced into the Cape Colony

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among whites. The I.O.G.T. was one of a multitude of similar fraternal lodges organized by prohibitionists in the United States; founded about 1851, it quickly spread to Canada, and organized internationally in 1855. It was introduced to Britain in 1868 and thence spread to various parts of the British empire, Scandinavia and South America. By 1875 it is claimed its membership worldwide was 735,000, with 200,000 in Britain. In the United States, it became the most powerful prohibitionist organization in the post-Civil War period, and it was the Good Templars who, in 1868-1869, organized the Prohibition party which has run candidates, including a presidential candidate, in every election since 1872. The I.O.G.T. opened its doors to women from the beginning (the first temperance society to do so); this

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 660.

<sup>34</sup> Rev. Benjamin Dlepu made the same assertion in 1889 (*ibid.*, 346, No. 5679) claiming that it was mixed with rice, "which greatly increases its strength."

<sup>35</sup> "Shebeens" are small businesses (usually run by women) where beer is made and retailed illegally – a kind of poor man's pub. Often they "bootleg" stronger liquors as well. Although the making of "Kaffir beer" has not been disturbed in the rural areas, it has long been prohibited in the cities.

<sup>36</sup> *Imvo* (19 July 1888). This was a paper read to the United Missionary Conference.

<sup>37</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 686, No. 11681.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 687-689.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 652-655.

was a major factor in its enormous success in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>40</sup>

Although the constitution of the Good Templars proclaimed racial equality, neither in the southern United States<sup>41</sup> nor in the Cape Colony was this accepted by whites. In the Cape, Henry Kayser (L.M.S. Congregational missionary) and Mr. Geard of Lovedale instead organized a separate society, the Independent Order of True Templars (I.O.T.T.) on an interracial basis.<sup>42</sup> Another temperance organization being promoted in the Cape in 1882 seems to have had a similar "colour" problem. The "Blue Ribbon Army Society" was being widely promoted by a Mr. Mountain and had a great deal of success in Graaff-Reinet according to the Dutch Reformed Church clergymen Charles Murray and Auke Compaan.<sup>43</sup> A parallel "Red Ribbon Army Society" was set up for Coloureds. Murray said only that they belonged "to different congregations."<sup>44</sup> However, John Knox Bokwe's comments indicate the real arrangement:

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I quite agree with you about the red ribbon arrangement, and Mr. Mountain should have withstood so objectionable a prejudice in men, I suppose, professing Christianity. If this goes on, the whites will soon be wanting a separate Christ for the black.<sup>45</sup>

The founding of the Lovedale "Endeavour" Temple in 1876 probably marks the beginning of the I.O.T.T. The Good Templars was a highly elaborated example of American fraternal societies of a semimasonic type and the I.D.T.T. was a very careful copy. There were local "temples" (lodges); a number of these in a region were organized into a Grand Temple; these in turn were organized into a Right Worthy True Temple.

Sometime before 1882, a number of temples of the I.O.T.T. were organized into the Eastern Grand Temple; its primarily African composition was indicated by the fact that Kayser called it "The Eastern Kaffir Grand Temple." The Right Worthy True Temple seems to have been organized officially about 1894-1895 in an attempt to bring together the corresponding organization among Coloureds. Kayser had long held the title of Right Worthy True Templar and seems to have been head of all. The period in the 1890s saw a

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<sup>40</sup> See Ruth E. Spence, *Prohibition in Canada* (Toronto, 1919), 49-53; Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America* (Montclair, New Jersey, 1969), 145 and *passim*; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 21 (1973), 822.

<sup>41</sup> This "colour" issue created a secession in 1876. The regional state Grand Lodges in the South were being allowed to keep blacks out. The British delegation held that the International Lodge should compel the southern Grand Lodges to charter and admit blacks. Nova Scotia, Newfoundlander and three state lodges followed the British delegation into secession. This breach was closed only in 1887; see Spence, *Prohibition in Canada*, 50-51 and Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition*, 198-199, 228. The British I.O.G.T. was itself split in 1878, Norman Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers* (London, 1968), 214. I found no evidence that any exception was taken to the exclusion of blacks in the Cape.

<sup>42</sup> Henry Kayser to Rev. Stormont, 19 April 1898, No. 68, MS 14, 303, Stormont Papers, Cory Library, Rhodes University; *Invo* (27 April 1898).

<sup>43</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 282-286, 294-295. However, John Knox Bokwe asserted that it had succeeded only on "a small scale" among Africans; Bokwe to H.G. Waddelove, 10 May 1886, in John Knox Bokwe, *Letterbooks*, v. I, South African Public Library, Cape Town [hereafter, Bokwe Letterbooks].

<sup>44</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 284, No. 4581.

<sup>45</sup> Bokwe Letterbooks, v. I.



renewed surge in activity and expansion in which Theo Schreiner played a prominent role. New temples were organized (including one in the Orange Free State) and by 1898, according to an *Imvo* report, the Eastern Grand Temple comprised over forty temples and more than five thousand members.<sup>46</sup>

Within the organization, there was a hierarchy of degrees and leadership positions, marked by grandiose titles, distinguishing regalias and elaborate rituals for passage from one "degree" to another. Each quarter a new secret password was sent round to all temples in "cypher"; the multiracial character of the organization was emphasized by the fact that the password went out in three languages; for example, November 1894-January 1895, English "Forward," Dutch "*Voorwaaren*," and Xhosa "*Pambili*."<sup>47</sup> The Good Templars did assist the I.O.T.T., and most of the regalia, rituals and organization seem to have been taken over directly.

The I.O.T.T. was interdenominational. The lists of officers and Bokwe's correspondents show Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and a few Anglicans. Not surprisingly in view of the role of Kayser and Lovedale in the organization of the society, Presbyterians and Congregationalists were most numerous, at least until the 1890s.

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Also, no Methodist or Anglican white missionaries seem to have become involved in the I.O.T.T. (however, a couple of white Methodist clergymen did identify themselves to the Liquor Laws Commission as Good Templars), and both Methodists and Anglicans had their own denominational temperance societies. It seems likely that most of those Methodists and Anglicans who joined did so while enrolled at Lovedale.

Denominationalism did become an issue in 1894 largely as a result of Theo Schreiner's temperance activities which included promoting the I.O.T.T.<sup>48</sup> Rev. Dlakiya, then stationed in East London, started a Wesleyan temple. This brought a protest from the East London Congregationalist, Walter Rubusana, who was Grand True Templar of the existing East London temple.<sup>49</sup> This issue eventually developed into a feud between Kayser and Schreiner. Other similar denominational lodges were arranged by Schreiner, but Kayser refused to issue the charters. On 14 May 1895, Kayser called a special meeting of Eastern Grand Temple Representatives to win support against the denominational charters and thus against Schreiner. However, far from taking sides with either man, the meeting passed two resolutions finding fault first with Kayser (that there was no provision in the constitution to prohibit denominational temples) and then with Schreiner for publishing a pamphlet on the subject before he had even taken the matter before the Right Worthy True

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<sup>46</sup> *Imvo* (27 April 1898).

<sup>47</sup> Bokwe to James Smith, 25 November 1894, Bokwe Letterbooks, v. II.

<sup>48</sup> Theo and Henrietta ("Het") Schreiner were both very active in the Good Templars and temperance work generally. There is a nice cameo description of them in Eric A. Walker, *W. P. Schreiner: A South African*, 2<sup>nd</sup> imp. (Oxford, 1969), 8-12, 38-39.

<sup>49</sup> Bokwe to Rubusana and Bokwe to Kayser, both 22 October 1894, Bokwe Letterbooks, v. II.

Temple.<sup>50</sup>

The degree of interracialism needs some qualification. Coloureds and Africans seem to have been organized in separate Grand Temples. White members would seem to have been almost entirely missionaries, and their role diminished rather markedly. For example, Rev. Moir had been Grand True Templar of the Lovedale Temple, but Bokwe claimed in February 1883 that Moir had not attended meetings for over a year.<sup>51</sup> As Moir was just leaving on furlough, Rev. Mziriba was appointed to replace him as Grand True Templar.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, there were still whites listed among the officers in the 1894-1896 period.<sup>53</sup>

While Kayser remained throughout the 1890s as the official head

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of the I.O.T.T. (the Right Worthy True Templar), leadership and direction were in fact in other hands, especially those of the African clergy. This was due in part to bitter conflicts between Kayser and African clergy in church matters, first with Makiwane over the control of a small outstation at Gillton and then with his protege and successor Isaac Wauchope (Citashe). Kayser's letters during the 1890s reveal growing bitterness and hostility towards African clergy. At least some of this hostility must have been apparent to them, and this helps to account for their shutting him out from the I.O.T.T. By 1898 the process was much beyond the stage indicated by the action of the special meeting of 1895 discussed above. In April 1898 the I.O.T.T. Eastern Grand Temple held a large meeting in Port Elizabeth which gave rise to the *Imvo* report of 27 April 1898. After recounting his own and Mr. Geard's roles in founding the I.O.T.T., Kayser, then retired in nearby Uitenhage, wrote very bitterly:

neither of us received so much as a notice of or invitation to any of their meetings. We could have gone & claimed our seats officially but we did not show ourselves as we thought that common sense & grateful courtesy would have suggested that course to them. I am surprised & grieved when men like Knox Bokwe & Wauchope were present & leaders.<sup>54</sup>

Bokwe frequently emphasized the rigor of I.O.T.T. regulations.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the I.O.T.T. did not move very quickly on the issue of "hop beer," in spite of pressure from Theo Schreiner.

As to Hop beer our Grand Temple's resolution *clearly disapproved of the use of Hop beer and advised the Temples to discourage it* but did not see its way meantime to make it compulsory, till the [sic] all the Temples have had an opportunity of discussing the

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<sup>50</sup> Minutes of special meeting, 14 May 1895, *ibid.*, v. II.

<sup>51</sup> Bokwe to Burness, 5 February 1883, *ibid.*, v. I.

<sup>52</sup> Bokwe to Burness and Bokwe to Kaysar, both 12 March 1883, *ibid.*, v. I.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, v. II.

<sup>54</sup> Kayser to Stormont, 19 April 1898, No. 68, MS 14,303, Stormont Papers, Cory Library, Rhodes University. Kayser was unable to adapt to the new, more assertive mood of African clergy in the 1890s.

<sup>55</sup> See Bokwe to W. Brown, no date, and Bokwe to H.G. Waddelove, 10 May 1886, Bokwe Letterbooks, v. I.

subject, when the question will be up for legislation-probably at next Grand Temple. Some of the brethren did not see the harm in hop beer, but the discussion at last Grand Temple opened their eyes & now the Constitution of the RW.T.T. [i.e., Right Worthy True Temple] when issued will show more clearly still that its use is illegal. In Kaffir land we require to proceed cautiously and carry the people's sympathy along with us to be successful.<sup>56</sup>

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Bokwe's letter was more than an explanation to Schreiner, it was also a polite "Don't tell us what to do." Bokwe was one of the most highly assimilated and least anti-European of African clergy,<sup>57</sup> but he was being finn-not an easy task with someone described as having fierce convictions and a dominating, dictatorial personality.<sup>58</sup> This rebuff, however politely disguised, together with the reduction of Kayser to little more than a figurehead shows that Africans regarded it as *their* organization and that they resisted any attempt by whites to direct or dominate.

The 1898 level (over forty temples and five thousand members) was probably a temporary high point, although the subsequent history of the organization has not yet been researched or written. That year marked the beginning of turmoil and the end of the relative political unity and concord among Xhosa political and religious leaders. Mzimba, an active member and officer of the True Templars, seceded from the Free Church of Scotland mission, and relations with his former colleagues (such as Makiwane and Bokwe, who were also officers of the I.O.T.T.) became increasingly bitter. In the same year, the rift in African political unity was established: *Imvo's* rival, *Izwi Labantu*, was founded in East London, and the 1898 election found Africans split between the emerging Progressive and South African parties. Rubusana began to emerge as the rival of Jabavu, a rivalry that led to the debacle of the 1914 Tembuland election; this personal rivalry was only part of a growing Xhosa-Mfengu estrangement and hostility.<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to imagine that the I.O.T.T. could have avoided some disruption in the wake of these intensely bitter feuds.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, the combined efforts in the churches and in the I.O.T.T. had resulted by the beginning of the twentieth century in total abstinence (including *utywala*) being virtually a

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<sup>56</sup> Bokwe to Theo Schreiner, 12 July 1894, *ibid.*, v. II.

<sup>57</sup> It is true that Bokwe entered the ministry rather late (evangelist 1900, probationer 1904, and full ordination 1936); see *Minutes of Synod of Kaffraria* (1900-1906), University of Fort Hare Library, Alice, South Africa. However, except for his brief two-year partnership with Jabavu at *Imvo* (1898-1900), Bokwe spent his entire life in active mission work, at Lovedale as Dr. Stewart's assistant until 1898 and then at Ugie as missionary from 1900.

<sup>58</sup> Walker, *Schreiner*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> This hostility is discussed at length in Mills, "The Role of African Clergy," 245-288.

<sup>60</sup> For the political background, see A.P. Walshe, "The Origins of African Political Consciousness in South Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, VII, 4 (1969), 583-610; Stanley Trapido, "African Divisional Politics in the Cape Colony, 1884 to 1910," *Journal of African History*, IX, I (1968), 79-98; C.C. Saunders, "The New African Elite in the Eastern Cape and Some Late Nineteenth Century Origins of African Nationalism," *Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries*, v. I (University of London. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, October 1969-April 1970), 44-55.

prerequisite for church membership for Africans.

The significance of this persistent movement among Africans requires further explanation. On the most obvious level, there was a great concern about the effects of excessive drinking and alcoholism. There can be no doubt that alcoholism was a growing problem. The proliferation of canteens in the eastern Cape was

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having devastating effects upon the African population as confinned by travellers, government officials, white farmers, missionaries, and almost everyone except those engaged in the liquor trade itself. African witnesses, Christian and non-Christian, commoners and chiefs, were virtually unanimous in confinning the seriousness of the problem and in begging for prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages; these witnesses included men who confessed their own addiction.

A good deal of testimony asserted that consumption of *utywala* was also very much greater than it had been previously. The twentieth-century ethnographies by Soga and Wilson describe frequent and extensive consumption of beer in connection with strong social and economic functions.<sup>61</sup> However, Rev. Chalmers asserted in 1881:

The drink of Kafir beer has changed within the last few years. . . . Only old men were allowed to drink it in olden time, and there were no such immense gatherings as there are in the present day. Up to within a few years, milk was the one great beverage at all feasts.<sup>62</sup>

Witnesses before the Liquor Laws Commission made similar assertions,<sup>63</sup> and Ludwig Alberti's early account tends to support them. In 1807 Alberti claimed that "only seldom and more for the sake of giving themselves a treat, do they serve themselves with an artificial inebriating drink."<sup>64</sup>

By the 1870s, the Xhosa had been demoralized and devastated by a series of crushing military defeats (in 1819, in 1835, in 1846-1847, in 1850-1853, and 1877-1878) and by the desperate, shattering gamble of the "cattle-killing" in 1856. John Chalmers testified in 1881: "I have even heard councillors, when I have remonstrated with them about taking to drink, say to me, 'We are already a crushed and destroyed people, and there is no use trying to

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perserve our nationality.' "<sup>65</sup> European conquest and the loss of land and cattle imposed an

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<sup>61</sup> Soga, *The Ama-Xosa*; Wilson, *Reaction to Conquest*.

<sup>62</sup> *Native Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 136, No. 2387.

<sup>63</sup> *Liquor Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, Margaret Ross, 637; Canon Woodrooffe, 738; Peter Quela, 654.

<sup>64</sup> Ludwig Alberti, *Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa in 1807*, trans, William Fehr (Cape Town, 1968), 24-25; however, Alberti is so obviously writing in the Enlightenment tradition of "the noble savage" when uncontaminated by "civilized" vices that his description cannot be regarded as decisive.

<sup>65</sup> *Native Laws Commission*, Minutes of Evidence, 152, No. 2606.

entirely new economic order upon the Xhosa, one in which they were increasingly compelled to go out and sell their labor to whites. Consequently, the growth of towns and of migrant labor were also cited as causes for the increase in alcoholism. Thus the temperance movement was an attempt to deal with a problem which was widely regarded by Africans as very serious for the wellbeing and perhaps even the survival of the Xhosa people. As I have tried to show, the movement owed more to African initiatives than to white influence. Without attempting to push the argument too far, it is possible to view temperance as a movement of resistance, albeit subconscious and directed more against effects than against causes.

In this movement, the I.O.T.T. and similar temperance organizations had two main functions. Their primary emphasis was upon the encouragement of individual, voluntary abstinence. Second, they undertook a variety of political and legal activities to secure the legal prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages to Africans. As indicated above, these activities included petitions to parliament (almost annually), representations before parliamentary commissions, and legal actions opposing the issuing or renewal of canteen licenses.<sup>66</sup> There may have been a third function. Brian Harrison has suggested that English temperance societies were at least partly an attempt to evolve new recreational patterns to meet the needs of urban workers in a situation where the old rural recreations were no longer appropriate.<sup>67</sup> The temperance societies-and especially the I.O.T.T.-were perhaps an attempt to replace the much condemned "beer drinks" and the newly emerging "shebeens."

However, the importance of this temperance movement extends far beyond this obvious level. Just as in North America, the temperance movement among Africans in the Cape Colony was a manifestation of postmillennial Christianity.<sup>68</sup> The latter included a belief in the possibility (and the imminence) of the perfecting of men and society to achieve the millennium (progress). The achievement

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of the millennial society required not only the perfecting of individuals by conversion and personal pietism but also the perfecting of society by the elimination of evils (political action). Liquor was almost always seen as one of the worst social evils, not only because of its direct effects upon individuals but also because so many other evils were attributed to it. Thus, the elimination of liquor was seen as a giant step towards the realization of the millennial society; prohibition was not only an end but also a means. In addition to the usual dreams and expectations embodied in the concept of the millennium, Africans

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<sup>66</sup> The Good Templars, the model which the I.O.T.T. was based, was strongly political. Their formation of the Prohibition party in the United States has already been noted. In Britain the Good Templars strongly supported the lobbying and pressuring of members of Parliament as well as the other political activities of the United Kingdom Alliance. See Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 241.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>68</sup> The roles of both postmillennial and premillennial forms of Christianity have been developed in Mills, "Taylor Revival of 1866," and in Wallace Mills, "The Fork in the Road: Religious Separatism versus African Nationalism in the Cape Colony, 1890-1910," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, IX, 1 (1978), 51-61.

looked forward to a society where they would be treated with dignity and equality. The temperance movement was thus a part of their efforts to bring it about in the Cape Colony.

By the end of the nineteenth century, disillusionment was growing. In North America, many adopted a pessimistic premillennialism which led to modern fundamentalism.<sup>69</sup> In South Africa, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>70</sup> growing disillusion had a similar effect and led to religious separatism. Others persevered, however. Though disabused of the notion that the millennium would be achieved quickly or easily, they also recognized that the battle would have to be enjoined on a much broader and more encompassing basis. In North America, this frequently led to the "social gospel" and Christian socialism-this is surely the strongest strand in the Canadian socialist political tradition.

In South Africa, there was a parallel transition. As I have argued in "The Fork in the Road," the earlier vision of a Christian society in which Africans would have an honorable place with equal opportunities with whites was not abandoned by all. However, there was a recognition that the realization of the dream would not be easy, that it would have to be worked for and fought for. It was in this context that African nationalism in South Africa was born and it was from this ideology that African nationalism drew much of its inspiration through the first six decades of this century. African nationalism and the African National Congress were thus a logical expansion of the means to be used to achieve the vision. It is, therefore, not a distortion to view the temperance movement as a precursor of African nationalism.

Moreover, the links were not restricted to the ideological level. The temperance movement also served as a training ground in organization, leadership and political activities. There is a striking

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analogy to be found in the female emancipation movements in Britain and North America. A good deal of recent literature on those movements has begun to stress the seminal role of participation by women in temperance activities. African nationalism was for Africans what the suffrage movement was for women: both were attempts to acquire equality of political, social and economic rights with those who dominated society. The role of temperance movements in the formative stages of both emancipation movements is too important to be ignored.

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<sup>69</sup> See Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago, 1970).

<sup>70</sup> See Mills, "The Fork in the Road."