

Temperance Movement

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A temperance movement is a social movement urging reduced use of alcoholic beverages. Temperance movements may criticize excessive alcohol use, promote complete abstinence, or pressure the government to enact anti-alcohol legislation.

Temperance movement by country

Australia

In Australia, the temperance movement began in the mid-1830s promoting moderation rather than abstinence. By the late 19th century a more successful abstinence-oriented movement emerged under the influence of the U.S. temperance movement. However, it failed to bring about prohibition despite a long campaign for local option. The movement's major success was in prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages after 6:00 in the afternoon, laws which led to the notorious six o'clock swill. This refers to the practice whereby customers would rush to drinking establishments after work and consume alcohol heavily and rapidly in anticipation of the 6:00 closing.

Ireland

In Ireland, a Catholic priest Theobald Mathew persuaded thousands of people to sign the pledge, therefore establishing the Teetotal Abstinence Society in 1838.

Many years later, in 1898 James Cullen founded the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association in response of the fading influence of the original temperance pledge.

In 1829 the Presbyterian minister Rev. John Edgar initiated a temperance movement, pouring his stock of whiskey out his window. Also many Orange lodges are "temperance lodges" and abstain from drinking. These particular lodges are more common in rural areas where the religious ethos of the organisation is more to the fore.

New Zealand

In 1836, at the first recorded temperance meeting was held in the Bay of Islands (Northland). The 1860s saw the foundation of a large number of temperance societies. Many provinces passed licensing ordinances giving residents the right to secure, by petition, the cancellation or granting of liquor licenses in their district. The Licensing Act of 1873 allowed the prohibition of liquor sales in districts if petitioned by two-thirds of residents. Despite the efforts of the temperance movement, the rate of convictions for drunkenness remained constant in New Zealand. The rapid increase in the number of convictions for public drunkenness was more a reflection of the growing population rather than social deterioration. In 1886 a national body called the New Zealand Alliance for Suppression and Abolition of the Liquor Traffic was formed pushing for control of the liquor trade

as a democratic right.

Towards the end of the 19th century it became apparent that problems associated with settlement, such as larrikinism and drunkenness, were growing in society. Increasing urbanization heightened public awareness of the gap between social aspirations and reality of the young colony. Generalisations from newspapers, visiting speakers & politicians in the 1890s allowed development of large public overreaction and fervour to the magnitude of the problem of alcohol. It became the firm opinion of a number of prominent New Zealanders that the colony's problems were associated with alcohol. In 1893 the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act aligned licensing districts with parliamentary electorates. Licencing Polls were to be held with each General Election. There were now three options to choose from. These were "continuance of the "status quo", reduction of the number of liquor licences by 25 percent, and local no-licence which would prevent public sale of alcohol within that electorate. Continuance and reduction only needed a majority, but local no licence needed three-fifths majority. From 1908 national prohibition became the third choice instead of reduction of licences - needing a three-fifths majority. In 1894 Clutha electorate voted 'no-license' and in 1902 Matura and Ashburton followed suit. In 1905 Invercargill, Oamaru and Greylinn voted 'no-license'. In 1908 Bruce, Wellington Suburbs, Wellington South, Masterton, Ohinemuri and Eden voted 'no-license' and many wine makers were denied the right to sell their wines locally and were forced out of business.

In 1911 the Liquor Amendment Act provided for national poll on prohibition and the New Zealand Viticultural Association was formed to "save this fast decaying industry by initiation of such legislation as will restore confidence among those who after long years of waiting have almost lost confidence in the justice of the Government. Through harsh laws and withdrawal of government support and encouragement that had been promised, a great industry had been practically ruined."

In 1911 a national referendum on prohibition was held with 55.8 percent in favour of prohibition, but not enough for the sixty percent majority required.

In 1914 sensing a growing feeling of wowsersism, Prime Minister Massey lambasted Dalmatian wine as "a degrading, demoralizing and sometimes maddening drink." Another referendum was held this year with 49 percent voting in favour of Prohibition. The three-fifths majority was replaced with a fifty percent majority. The 1917 election was delayed until 1919 because of World War I.

On April 10, 1919 a national poll for continuance was carried with 51%, due only to votes of Expeditionary Force soldiers returning from Europe. On December 7, 1919 prohibition won 49.7 percent of the vote. Of the 543,762 votes originally cast the prohibition lobby only lost out by 1632 votes. Of the 1744 Special Votes 278 were for Prohibition. The pressure applied from the temperance movement crippled New Zealand's young wine industry post World War I. Restrictive legislation was introduced on sale of liquor, and by 1928 the percentage of prohibition votes begin to decline.

Sri Lanka

The Temperance movement in Sri Lanka was motivated by Buddhism. It was also a front line organisation in the National Independence Movement. Most of the early officers of the society were pioneers in gaining independence. "The Temperance Movement was identified as the foundation for the independence struggle and many were killed,". The "Sura Virodhi Vyaparaya" against alcoholism launched by Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala in 1895, was seen by the British rulers as a direct attack on their regime which rented out taverns to get revenue for government coffers. At that time there were 2,038 taverns. After the Temperance Movement agitation there was a drastic drop to 190.

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, temperance as a mass movement originated in the 19th century. Before this, though there were diatribes published against drunkenness and excess, total abstinence from alcohol was very rarely advocated or practised. The earliest temperance societies, inspired by a Belfast professor of theology, and presbyterian church of Ireland Minister Rev. John Edgar, who poured his stock of whiskey out of his window in 1829, concentrated their fire on spirits rather than wine and beer. A more hard line attitude dates from March 1832 when Joseph Livesey started his Temperance Movement in Preston, requiring followers to sign a pledge of total abstinence. The term Teetotal is derived from a speech by Richard (Dickie) Turner, a follower of Livesey, in Preston in 1833. Livesey opened the first temperance hotel in 1833 and the next year founded the first temperance magazine, The Preston Temperance Advocate (1834-37). The British Association for the Promotion of Temperance was established by 1835.

The mass working class movement for universal suffrage, chartism,(1838 on) included a current called "temperance chartism". Faced with the refusal of the parliament of the time to give the right to vote to working people, the temperance chartists saw the campaign against alcohol as a way of proving to the elites that working class people were responsible enough to be granted the vote.

In 1847 the Band of Hope was founded in Leeds, with the stated aim of saving working class children from the perils of drink. The members had to pledge to abstain "from all liquors of an intoxicating quality, whether ale, porter, wine or ardent spirits, except as medicine"

In 1853, inspired by the Maine law in the USA, the United Kingdom Alliance led by John Bartholomew Gough was formed aimed at promoting a similar law prohibiting the sale of alcohol in the UK. This hard-line group of prohibitionists was opposed by other temperance organisations who preferred moral persuasion to a legal ban. This division in the ranks limited the effectiveness of the temperance movement as a whole. The impotence of legislation in this field was demonstrated when the Sale of Beer Act 1854 which restricted Sunday opening hours had to be

repealed, following widespread rioting. In 1859 a prototype prohibition bill was overwhelmingly defeated in the House of Commons.

Despite this setback Quakers, and the Salvation Army (founded in 1864) still lobbied parliament to restrict alcohol sales. Nonconformists were active with large numbers of Baptist, Methodist and Congregational ministers being teetotal. In Wales Lady Llanover closed all the public houses on her estate and was an outspoken critic of the evils of drink.

The League of the Cross was a Catholic total abstinence organisation founded in 1873 by Cardinal Manning. In 1876 the British Women's Temperance Association was formed to persuade men to stop drinking. From 1880 to 1882 the cause of abstinence was revived by the Gospel Temperance or Blue Ribbon movement, based in America. They sent a member named Richard Booth to promote their cause in England through mass meetings held up and down the country. In 1884 the National Temperance Federation, associated with the Liberal Party was founded.

The temperance movement received an unexpected boost due to state intervention when the Liberal government passed the Defence of the Realm Act in 1914 at the beginning of the First World War. According to the provisions of this act pub hours were licensed, beer was watered down and was subject to a penny a pint extra tax. This situation was maintained by the subsequent establishment of the State Management Scheme in 1916 which nationalised breweries and pubs in certain areas of Britain where armaments manufacture was taking place.

Between the wars American exponents of the sterling example set to Britain by National Prohibition, such as William "Pussyfoot" Johnson and Dr Armor, toured the country, to be met with derision and (in Johnson's case) violence. In the end the dismal example of the complete failure of Prohibition in America put paid to any remote chance that the temperance lobby would succeed in achieving its aims in the UK.

It should be recorded that the former Manchester City F.C. football stadium Maine Road took its name from a street that had been renamed Maine Road (from Dog Kennel Lane) by members of the Temperance Movement. They selected the name as a result of the 1853 Maine law. Since the demolition of the stadium, the street's significance has reduced however it still retains the name as recognition of the works performed by the Temperance Movement in that area of Manchester.

Mathew James Fitzpatrick's in Rawtenstall is the last remaining temperance bar in the UK and still to this day provides the region with non-alcoholic beverages and cordials. The labels of their bottles bears one of the last temperance pledges to be signed in the area.

United States

As the Civil War approached, economic change and urbanization were accompanied by increasing

poverty, ordinances were relaxed and alcohol problems increased dramatically. Apparently influenced by Dr. Benjamin Rush's widely discussed belief that the excessive use of alcohol was injurious to physical and psychological health, about 200 farmers in a Connecticut community formed a temperance association in 1789 to ban the making of whiskey. Similar associations were formed in Virginia in 1800 and New York State in 1808. Within the next decade, other temperance organizations were formed in eight states, some being state-wide organizations. In the late nineteenth century, most Protestant denominations and the American wing of the Catholic Church extended support of the movement to limit or restrict the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. These groups believed that alcohol consumption led to corruption, prostitution, spousal abuse and other criminal activities. The reform movement met with resistance by brewers and distillers. Business owners were also fearful of women having the right to vote, because it was expected that they would tend to vote for temperance.

The future looked bright for the young movement, which advocated temperance or levelness rather than abstinence. But many of the leaders overestimated their strength; they expanded their activities and took positions on observance of the Sabbath, and other moral issues. They became involved in political in-fighting and by the early 1820s their movement stalled.

But some leaders persevered in pressing their cause forward. Americans such as Lyman Beecher, who was a Connecticut minister, had started to lecture his fellow citizens against all use of liquor in 1825. The American Temperance Society was formed in 1826 and benefited from a renewed interest in religion and morality. Within 12 years it claimed more than 8,000 local groups and over 1,500,000 members. By 1839, 18 temperance journals were being published. Simultaneously, many Protestant churches were beginning to promote temperance.

Temperance education

In 1873 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) established a Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction in Schools and Colleges, with Mary Hunt as National Superintendent. The WCTU was an influential organization with a membership of 120,000 by 1879. Frances Willard led the group under the motto "Do Everything" to protect women and children. Some of the changes the WCTU sought included property and custody rights for women, women's suffrage, raising the age of consensual sex, peace arbitration, women's education, and advocacy for working rights of women.

Because of the correlation between drinking and domestic violence--many drunken husbands abused family members--the temperance movement existed alongside various women's rights and other movements, including the Progressive movement, and often the same activists were involved in all of the above. Many notable voices of the time, ranging from Lucy Webb Hayes to Susan B. Anthony, were active in the movement. In Canada, Nellie McClung was a longstanding advocate of

temperance. As with most social movements, there was a gamut of activists running from violent (Carrie Nation) to mild (Neal S. Dow).

Anti-Saloon League

The Anti-Saloon League, under the leadership of Wayne Wheeler stressed political results and utilized pressure politics. It did not demand that politicians change their drinking habits, only their votes in the legislature. Other organizations like the Prohibition Party and the WCTU lost influence to the League. The League mobilized its religious coalition to pass state (and local) legislation (establishing dry states and dry counties). Energized by the anti-German sentiment during World War I, in 1918 it achieved the main goal of passage of the 18th Amendment establishing National Prohibition.

Temperance fountains

Public drinking fountains sprang up all over the United States following the Civil War. Cast-stone statues of Hebe were marketed for use in temperance fountains. In Union Square (New York City) the James Fountain (1881), is a Temperance fountain with the figure of Charity who empties her jug of water, aided by a child; it was donated by Daniel Willis James and sculpted by Adolf Donndorf. In Washington DC "the" Temperance Fountain was donated to the city in 1882 by Temperance crusader Henry D. Cogswell. This fountain was one of a series of fountains he designed and commissioned in a belief that easy access to cool drinking water would keep people from consuming alcohol. Under its stone canopy where the words "Faith," "Hope," "Charity," and "Temperance" are chiseled. Atop this canopy is a life-sized heron, and the centerpiece is a pair of entwined heraldic scaly dolphins. Originally, visitors were supposed to freely drink ice water flowing from the dolphins' snouts with a brass cup attached to the fountain and the overflow was collected by a trough for horses, but the city tired of having to replenish the ice in a reservoir underneath the base and disconnected the supply pipes.

Temperance organizations

Temperance organizations of the United States played an essential role in bringing about ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution establishing national prohibition of alcohol. They included:

- the American Issue Publishing House
- the American Temperance Society
- the Anti-Saloon League
- the British Women's Temperance Association

the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America
the Committee of Fifty (1893)
the Daughters of Temperance
the Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction
the Flying Squadron of America
the Independent Order of Good Templars
the Knights of Father Matthew
the Lincoln-Lee Legion
the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals
the National Temperance Society and Publishing House
the Prohibition Party
the Scientific Temperance Federation
the Sons of Temperance
the Templars of Honor and Temperance
the Abstinence Society
the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (active)
the National Temperance Council
the World League Against Alcoholism (a pro-prohibition organization)

There was often considerable overlap in membership in these organizations, as well as in leadership. Prominent temperance leaders in the United States included Bishop James Cannon, Jr., James Black, Ernest Cherrington, Neal S. Dow, Mary Hunt, William E. Johnson (known as "Pussyfoot" Johnson), Carrie Nation, Howard Hyde Russell, John St. John, Billy Sunday, Father Mathew, Andrew Volstead and Wayne Wheeler.