

1 Contesting the Moral High Ground

Overproduction and the Temperance Onslaught, 1880–1928

It cannot for a moment be denied that the world's overproduction of grapes has considerably increased during the last quarter of a century. This has been caused by a more intensive cultivation in the wine countries like Algeria, Tunis, California, The Argentine, Chili [sic] and other South American States, and to a certain extent, Australia and South Africa . . . Unfortunately, for the wine-grower, the consumption of wine has on the whole fallen considerably. This is due to a number of causes, of which I mention the propaganda in favour of total prohibition, which culminated in its adoption by the United States of North America . . . To this rule our country is no exception. It is no use arguing that we suffer from under consumption and not over-production. So long as production exceeds consumption – inclusive of exports – there is over production.¹

(Perold, 1931)

In their analysis of the eighteenth-century Cape economy, Pieter Van Duin and Robert Ross maintain that there was no systemic problem of overproduction, in large part because of the robust demand for wine in Cape Town.² As we have seen, the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the loss of export markets and the reduced significance of the city as a maritime hub. Given the expansion of production that could find no ready outlet, it must have felt very much like there was a crisis of overproduction by the 1860s. The onset of phylloxera dealt with that problem in a summary fashion, wiping out investments in vineyards and compounding the financial plight of many producers. However, farmers quickly took to replanting vineyards in the 1890s, such that the production levels at the moment when phylloxera struck had already been exceeded by 1907. This is perhaps surprising when the prospects looked so uncertain. However, this reflected a global trend, as A. I. Perold – alert to the bigger picture, as always – indicated in 1931. But Perold also put his finger on something else, which was the reality that consumption in many countries had been buffeted by the impact of global temperance.

¹ A. I. Perold, "The South African wine industry and overproduction", *Wine and Spirit: A South African Review*, no. 2, November 1931, p. 35.

² Van Duin and Ross, *Economy*, pp. 50–51.

In this chapter, I consider both sides of the equation – that is, the efforts of the temperance movement to restrict wine consumption and the efforts of the KWV to increase the market for wine whilst balancing the interests of different rural constituencies. I begin this account by situating the South African story within the contentious politics that followed the ending of the phylloxera crisis in Europe. Here, I deploy France as a foil for understanding the range of possibilities that were present at the Cape.

Wine, Regulation and Temperance in Comparative Perspective

France was the first to be struck by phylloxera and here, arguably more than anywhere else, the future configuration of the wine industry was shaped by the contestation that surrounded restructuring. Under the onslaught of phylloxera, wine production dwindled, exports of wine plummeted and import of wine surged by a factor of 25 between 1870 and 1889 – all of which redounded to the benefit of Spanish and Italian producers before they too succumbed.³ As the solution of grafting to American rootstock found favour, significant changes ensued across Europe. James Simpson observes that the costs associated with grafting, and the need for greater chemical use, led to increased barriers to (re-)entry.⁴ Whereas those with sufficient capital could opt for the development of superior wines in favoured locations, the mass of ordinary producers had to pay close consideration to financial viability. Hence many opted to plant cultivars that guaranteed a high yield and were considered more resistant to disease. There was also an orientation towards regions where land was relatively cheap. Hence French producers faced renewed competition from Spain and Italy, where plantings and the output of wine increased significantly at the close of the nineteenth century.⁵ At the same time, there were significant shifts in the centre of gravity within all these countries, assisted by improvements to transport infrastructure. In France, the output was heavily dominated by the Midi (south of France), where the Aramon grape – which reputedly yielded up to seven times more volume per hectare – was planted more widely than ever before.⁶ It is telling that the total area under vines in France was significantly lower in 1905 (at 1,669,000 hectares) than it had been in 1878

³ Lachiver, *Vins*, p. 48; Simpson, *Creating Wine*, p. 42.

⁴ Simpson, *Creating Wine*, pp. 38–39. ⁵ Simpson, *Creating Wine*, pp. 41–48.

⁶ Charles Warner cites Chares Gide's estimates in the greater yields for the Aramon grape. Charles K. Warner, *The Winegrowers of France and the Government since 1875* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 10. Plantings of Aramon preceded phylloxera but was more widely planted thereafter. As a whole, yields in the Midi in the first decade of the twentieth century averaged 49 hl. as opposed to 27 hl. in the rest of France. Simpson, *Creating Wine*, table 3.2, p. 66.

(2,296,000 hectares), whereas the output of wine had climbed back to pre-phylloxera levels by 1913.⁷

An oversupply of ordinary wines exerted downward pressure on prices. In the end, it required a measure of state intervention to square the circle. In France, there were two diagnoses of the underlying problems and two related sets of solutions. The first was that there was a veritable epidemic of fraud that greatly augmented the volume of what was being sold. This assumed the shape, firstly, of wine shipped in from further afield that was passed off as French, and secondly, it entailed various forms of adulteration. Warner cites one estimate that fraudulent wines accounted for as much as 40 per cent of French national production in 1902.⁸ Adulteration also damaged consumer confidence which was reflected in reduced exports to the British market.⁹ Part of the difficulty was that the issue divided constituencies within France. Producers in the Midi presented themselves as the hapless victims of unscrupulous *négociants* who adulterated wines with imports from neighbouring countries, as well as Algeria.¹⁰ This came to a head in the much memorialized revolt of the Midi in 1907. Meanwhile, *vignerons* in Champagne complained that their own reputation was being sullied by inferior wine from the Midi being passed off as their own.¹¹ A priority was to define practices that were blatantly fraudulent and to introduce legal sanctions. As important was the sanctioning of discrete territorial appellations, following the passage of a framework law in 1905. Demarcating the boundaries could be a fraught exercise, as the protests in Champagne in 1911 amply demonstrated, but it was fundamental to the campaign against fraud.¹²

The second diagnosis was that *vignerons* were simply producing too much ordinary wine for a saturated market.¹³ Here, the solution was to push for an improvement in the quality of wines from designated appellations, while imposing limits on fresh plantings and promoting shy-yielding varieties. Under the rules sanctioned by the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) system, farmers could only plant designated cultivars, were required to restrict yields and had to respect certain winemaking rules. In regions where more bulk wine was produced, smaller producers were encouraged to join cooperatives that could draw on concessionary loans to invest in the cellars and

⁷ Lachiver, *Vins*, pp. 582–583; Simpson, *Creating Wine*, pp. 36–38, figure 2.3, table 2.3; Warner, *Winegrowers*, table 4, p. 15.

⁸ Warner, *Winegrowers*, p. 14. ⁹ Simpson, *Creating Wine*, pp. 92–98.

¹⁰ Harvey Smith, "Agricultural workers and the French wine growers revolt of 1907", *Past and Present* 79, 1978; Smith, *Terror*, ch. 1.

¹¹ Guy, *When Champagne*, p. 121. ¹² Guy, *When Champagne*, chs. 5–6.

¹³ In France, the struggle to prevent overproduction had a long history. In the eighteenth century, France had witnessed a rapid expansion of production at the expense of quality, mostly driven by peasant households, despite the best efforts of local authorities and central government to outlaw fresh plantings. Lachiver, *Vins*, pp. 335–336.

equipment that would enable better wine to be made. Progress was slow, but by 1914, there were 79 wine cooperatives in France.¹⁴ In 1944, a separate category of Vin Delimité de Qualité Supérieure (VDQ) was created to meet the needs of the cooperative sector. At the same time, the Statut de la Viticulture which was ‘promulgated by the government, between 1931 and 1935 and modified by various decrees since’ addressed the root causes of overproduction.¹⁵ The Statut imposed restrictions on fresh plantings and established subsidies for uprooting vines, with financial penalties for farmers who allowed yields to rise above a specified level. It also provided for the enforced distillation of surplus wine and the blockage of wine sales when prices fell below a specified point.¹⁶ The surplus had to be surrendered to a government agency that distilled it and found other inventive uses for the wine.¹⁷

France threw up its own version of the temperance movement, but as Joseph Bohling demonstrates, the defenders of quality wine and temperance advocates ultimately found common cause in the assault on spirits – with wine being marketed to the public as a healthy alternative.¹⁸ The French model was therefore one that recognized the necessity of embracing a spectrum from *premier cru* Burgundies and top-growth Bordeaux at one end, to table wines at the other. Whereas much of the premium wine would continue to be exported, the expectation was that *vin ordinaires* would be consumed by ordinary French men and women as part of their daily diet. The premise was that a high level of export and domestic production would together address overproduction and guarantee everyone’s livelihoods.

At the Cape, the issues were posed rather differently around the turn of the century. Imports of wine were negligible, and the question of fraud did not really arise – except in the shape of Cape wines that were blended into French wines. At the Cape, three main issues were at stake. The first was the indifferent quality, which had been a stock complaint since the nineteenth century. By all accounts, Cape wines tasted different by the time they were reached Europe, but even at home the vast majority were deemed to be lacking in character. The diagnosis remained largely the same: namely that farmers who lacked modern pressing facilities allowed stalks and foreign matter to enter the must, while the resulting wines were often described as being overly alcoholic.

¹⁴ Simpson, *Creating Wine*, pp. 72–73. ¹⁵ Loubère, *Wine Revolution*, pp. 126–136.

¹⁶ Loubère, *Wine Revolution*, p. 132. A separate category of *vins de pays* was recognized in 1968 and was not covered by these rules.

¹⁷ This included the production of petrol and fuel for cars. Joseph Bohling, *The Sober Revolution: Appellation Wine and the Transformation of France* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 31. On this and subsidies for uprooting see Loubère, *Wine Revolution*, pp. 131–133.

¹⁸ This was immortalized in the slogan “Drink Well, Drink a Little, in Order to Drink for a Long Time”. Bohling, *Sober Revolution*, p. 100.

In parallel with France, the solution was sought in the promotion of cooperative wineries that could bear the cost of installing modern production facilities. In 1905, following the establishment of a Commission of Enquiry, the Cape government made concessionary loans available to cooperative wineries. These initially struggled to become viable and, by 1913, after the government was forced to write off the original advances, the number had fallen from nine to five in total. But some of these became well-established and steadily cemented a reputation for producing wines of dependable quality.¹⁹

There was also a question about whether the varieties that were planted were conducive to achieving superior quality. Von Babo was of the view that Semillon, Chenin Blanc, Pontac and Muscadel were all eminently capable of making delicate and aromatic wines, provided the highest standards of vinification were observed.²⁰ Groendruif/Semillon had been the dominant grape in the nineteenth century. In 1823, William Bird reckoned that there were 11 types of grape that were grown at the Cape. He estimated that out of a total of 25.2 million vines, Semillon – ‘the common green grape’ which in practice was often reddish in colour because of genetic mutation²¹ – accounted for no fewer than 21 million vines.²² This was the grape from which Cape Madeira was produced. The second most planted cultivar was Muscadel, which was the source of sweet wines and accounted for 525,000 vines, presumably including both the white and the red, mutated version. Pontac, a dark red varietal that Bird (half wrongly) associated with Cote Rôtie and the Douro, ranked third with 270,000 vines.²³ Bird noted that Chenin Blanc, ‘which gives the full-bodied steen wine, so-called from the same grape of the Rhine and which is well-adapted for wine, but not productive’,²⁴ accounted for 180,000 vines. The remainder was made up of Hanepoot, or Muscat d’Alexandrie, grapes that were considered unsuitable for wine production, and some lesser varieties.

¹⁹ The five that remained were the Drakenstein (near Paarl), Bovlei (near Wellington), Wellington, Drostyd (Tulbagh) and Helderberg cooperative wineries. Union of South Africa, Report of the Wine Commission (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1937) [U/G. No. 25, 1937], pp. 8, 18 [hereinafter *Wine Commission*].

²⁰ Leipoldt, *300 Years*, p. 138.

²¹ Perold observed that ‘red Greengrape’ pre-dominated in the 1870s. A. I. Perold, ‘Historical notes on the Cape wine industry’, in *Wine Book of South Africa* (Stellenbosch: Wine & Spirit, 1936), p. 93, reflecting on the evidence given by Charles G. Marais of Jonkershoek to a questionnaire and published in *Het Zuid-Afrikaansche Tijdschrift*, November 1878.

²² William Wilberforce Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822* (London: John Murray, 1823), p. 112. The provenance of these figures is left unclear other than they supposedly emanated from a reliable source.

²³ Pontac is actually Teinturier. It is indeed used in Douro wines under the name of Tinta Francisca, but Côte-Rôtie wines are made mainly from Syrah grapes, with some including Vioigner. Robinson, Harding and Vouillamoz, *Wine Grapes*, pp. 1040–1041.

²⁴ Bird, *State*, pp. 112–113. Clearly, Chenin Blanc is associated with the Loire rather than the Rhine.

Unfortunately, there seem to be no reliable profiles for the decades that followed. But anticipating the possible arrival of phylloxera, the Vine Diseases Commission of 1881 conducted a census and provided highly incomplete figures for the areas planted with each of the main varieties. From the indicative figures in Table 1.1, it can be seen that Semillon remained dominant but faced greater competition than before. Hanepoot placed a distant second and Steen/Chenin Blanc came in third. Of the red varieties, only Pontac featured in the list.

Following the replanting of the vineyards after phylloxera, the vineyard profile shifted. The data in Table 1.2 is expressed in terms of production levels rather than numbers of vines, but it reveals the relative importance of particular cultivars by 1909. It can be seen that Semillon remained the most significant of the cultivars, accounting for 39.5 per cent of production. But what is striking is that the second most important cultivar was now Chenin Blanc, which accounted for 5,473 leaguers (31,633 hl.), or 20.1 per cent of wine produced. An even more striking transformation is that a red cultivar came in a close third, namely Hermitage/Cinsault, which contributed as much as 17.5 per cent of production. Palomino and red Muscadel were the only other varieties of real significance. Unlike in parts of France, it would be difficult to argue that there had been a downgrading in the quality of the cultivars. Indeed, the opposite is probably the case.²⁵ It is true that of the so-called noble varieties, only Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc made the list. Nevertheless, Chenin Blanc was capable of producing exceptional wine – with Cyrus Redding noting that some of it ‘is really excellent when about seven years old’ and Baron von Babo crediting it as ‘a most delicate wine’.²⁶ The replacement of Pontac by Cinsault as the red grape of choice was probably an improvement if the intention was to create table wines.²⁷ Some of the most distinctive wines in South Africa today are made from Cinsault as well as from Chenin Blanc. Hence it was much less a question of the intrinsic attributes of the cultivars than the attention paid to viticulture and winemaking. However, by 1909, much of the grape production was channelled into the production of brandy. Some of the brandy was made from wine spirit and some from the whole grapes, while a coarser version was distilled from the husks. Brandy could be distilled from any of these grapes but was most likely to be made from Semillon and Palomino. Where farms were geared to brandy production, high yields were privileged and much less attention was paid to the quality of

²⁵ Both White Muscadel/Muscat de Frontignan and Pontac were phased out under Von Babo and his successor, Clemens Mayer. Estreicher, “Brief history”, p. 526.

²⁶ Redding, *History*, p. 316; Leipoldt, *300 Years*, pp. 110, 138.

²⁷ The plantings of Muscat de Frontignan/Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains, which had been associated with the most delicate Constantia wines, appear to have declined in significance. Aramon seems never to have been planted.

Table 1.1. *Reported number of vines in 1881*

Division	Groendruif (Semillon)	Steen (Chenin Blanc)	Muscadel	Hanepoot >(Muscatd' Alexandrie)	Pontac	Fransdruif (Palomino)	Total
Bedford	–	–	–	–	–	–	1,500
Cape	392,200	521,000	492,250	453,250	71,000	137,300	2,656,300
Caledon	86,500	500	500	15,000	–	–	1,318,900
Clanwilliam	–	–	–	–	–	–	160,500
Calvinia	600	–	–	44,800	–	–	150,200
George	–	–	81,600	74,600	–	34,000	211,200
Jansenville	–	–	–	–	–	–	134,400
Malmesbury	611,000	157,000	52,000	64,000	–	18,000	2,478,000
Paarl	12,042,500	454,000	112,250	1,172,000	272,000	168,000	18,203,300
Piquetberg	–	–	–	–	–	–	560,000
Prince Albert	–	–	62,000	132,000	–	24,000	591,000
Robertson	246,000	9,000	560,900	597,700	–	133,000	4,143,900
Riversdale	–	40,300	119,400	49,900	–	70,800	280,400
Stellenbosch	6,911,500	1,221,000	74,000	135,000	529,000	160,000	14,651,800
Swellendam	161,000	–	9,000	–	–	20,000	294,000
Tulbagh	46,000	39,000	–	–	–	–	630,000
Uniondale	–	–	105,500	164,800	–	94,500	413,500
Uitenhage	–	–	–	–	–	–	1,000
Willowmore	71,000	–	4,900	9,800	–	5,500	174,500
Worcester	1,247,000	–	120,000	2,086,500	22,000	–	5,548,800
Total	21,815,100	2,442,300	1,795,050	5,600,450	894,000	867,000	52,603,400

Source: Extract from Report of Vine Diseases Commission, 1881, in Perold, “Historical notes”, p. 110.

Table 1.2. *South African wine and brandy production leaguers and morgen, and areas under vine, 1909*

Area	Pontac	Hermitage	Cab Sauv	Steen	Sauv Blanc	Green Grape	White French	White Muscadel	Red Muscadel	TOTAL WINE	Brandy – Dop	Brandy Grape	Brandy Wine	TOTAL Brandy	Areas under vine morgen
Caledon	8	53	...	115	3	328	20	23	...	550	68	14	...	83	225
Cape	15	843	117	553	4	70	9	7	6	1,626	60	70	23	154	714
Ceres	...	13	...	...	...	133	...	...	...	147	1	58	...	60	95
Ladysmith	...	...	...	2	...	...	70	22	...	95	3	51	...	55	47
Malmesbury	...	215	8	39	...	1,507	68	1	30	1,869	131	...	1	133	900
Montagu	13	...	...	...	...	35	84	88	1,195	1,416	92	645	2	739	331
Oudstshoom	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	118	4	122	102
Paarl	201	1,627	45	927	16	1,888	222	89	37	5,053	469	...	29	499	2,223
Piquetberg	...	11	...	267	...	231	17	...	6	533	32	...	...	33	329
Port Albert	...	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	17	24	8	...	...	36	26
Riverdale	...	...	...	...	...	1	8	...	9	18	83	27	...	101	25
Robertson	6	112	...	1,087	...	146	618	65	1,024	3,059	477	17	46	1,532	684
Stellenbosch	113	892	69	2,322	251	1,101	9	1	2	4,762	200	1,008	...	209	1,621
Swellendam	...	...	...	...	...	12	27	...	8	48	...	8	...	189	145
Tulbagh	1	128	...	67	...	774	73	3	52	1,100	65	188	1	67	364
Wellington	12	306	6	...	...	2,348	...	...	...	2,673	201	...	...	201	805
Worcester	55	567	12	91	...	2,150	1,013	111	206	4,206	244	...	8	1,017	1,478
Grand Total	425	4,769	257	5,473	275	10,735	2,239	411	2,594	27,179	2,141	2,974	115	5,230	10,120

Source: Cape Archives (CA), AMPT PUBS C/1/2/1/149, "Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly: Report of Commission of Enquiry into the Economic Condition of the Wine Districts of the Cape Colony" [G-47-1909].

the grapes. Conversely, it was in the areas where grapes were destined for wine production that more rigorous tending of the vines was likely to result in better wine from the cultivars that were available at the start of the twentieth century.

The second set of issues turned on the volume of wine that was produced. During the VOC years, one of the barriers to the extension of the vine had been entirely physical. It was relatively easy to transport wines from Stellenbosch, Wellington, Paarl and Franschhoek to Cape Town by waggon, but the high chain of mountains that lay beyond placed practical limits on further expansion. But in the nineteenth century, the construction of mountain passes altered the spectrum of possibilities. The Bain's Kloof Pass, which afforded a direct connection between Wellington and the Breede River Valley around 1849, initially catered to horse-drawn waggons and subsequently to motorized traffic. Moreover, a railway from Cape Town was routed through Worcester and Matjiesfontein in the direction of Beaufort West – the first leg of which was opened in 1877. This imparted greater economic potential to the valley and the expanse of the Karoo to the east. However, it was by no means certain that this was an area best suited to the vine. The Breede River Valley is naturally arid because the rains mostly fall on the other side of the mountains, and it experiences a very high rate of water loss through evaporation.²⁸ Most of the seasonal rain and snow falls in the mountains and the water then runs off through a multiplicity of streams that feed into the Breede River. In the nineteenth century, the river would overflow its banks during the winter months, creating a substantial floodplain, while in the summer it effectively dried up. The attraction of the valley initially resided in the access to pasturage for cattle and horses. With the ostrich boom of the later nineteenth century, driven by the fashion for feathers in Europe, many turned to rearing or produced lucerne as fodder. Lucerne makes heavy demands on water, and this placed a greater premium on management of the river. Farmers planted vines on the mountain slopes where numerous springs ensured a supply of water during the dry months.²⁹ By the 1860s, some had begun to cut irrigation furrows that diverted the waters of the Breede River. The figures presented by the Commission of Enquiry into the Economic Conditions of the Wine Districts (Table 1.2) revealed that Worcester could already lay claim to having the third largest area of land under vines by 1909, behind Paarl and

²⁸ Eric H. Bolsman, *Bertrams Guide to South African Wines of Origin* (Cape Town: Bertrams, 1976) estimated annual rainfall at 85 cm for Constantia and 35 cm for Robertson but falling to 21 cm on the eastern side of the Worcester district, bordering the Karoo (pp. 53, 65, 72). Contemporary estimates tend towards 40 cm for Robertson and Worcester and 52 cm for Stellenbosch. Groot Constantia claims to receive 110 cm, a high estimate that is widely repeated.

²⁹ Interview with Abrie Bruwer, 16 October 2009.

Stellenbosch.³⁰ The Commission believed the total number of vines was probably more in the region of 100 million rather than the 52 million that was reported. This would have represented a tripling of plantings since the 1820s, which seems highly unlikely. What these rather notional statistics do reveal is that vineyards were planted across a very wide area including the Karoo, but also stretching to Willowmore, Prince Albert and Graaf-Reinet in the eastern Cape and as far north as Calvinia.

Inevitably, concerns were expressed about the likely impact on overall production if vineyard planting accelerated. The same Commission concluded that in the Stellenbosch, Paarl and Wellington districts, ‘there are no crops or subsidiary industries which would give the farmer in these districts the same return from a limited area as the vine does under normal conditions, nor are there any other agricultural pursuits capable of maintaining on a similar area of land so dense a population as the viticultural industry . . .’.³¹ But it maintained that there were encouraging signs of diversification on the other side of the mountain, where the vine was being abandoned in favour of lucerne and ostrich farming.

As regards the Worcester, Robertson and Montagu Districts, however, the position, as stated before, is being entirely altered by the increased area of land that is being brought under irrigation, and the constant influx of farmers with capital from the Oudtshoorn District. The farmers too are here, as a rule, more extensive and more adaptable to stock and mixed farming generally, with the result that wherever it has been found possible to bring the rich Karoo soil under irrigation this is being done and viticulture is being abandoned for the, at present, more profitable lucerne growing and ostrich farming – some instances coming to the Commission’s notice where farmers who formerly derived practically their whole income from the vine have now uprooted whole vineyards, in many instances healthy vines, and put down lucerne instead.

This assessment proved to be less than prescient because in 1914 the second ostrich boom collapsed, and with it the viability of lucerne production. The crash culminated in a retreat of farmers from the Karoo into the Breede River Valley, many of whom turned to planting vines, benefiting initially from the enhanced soil fertility bestowed by lucerne.³² More significantly, thoughts turned to the possibilities for irrigation. After the Boer War, an individual initiative to settle former soldiers and immigrants on an irrigation scheme at what is now Bonnievale had been a qualified success because of the low water levels in the summer months, and associated salinity.³³ The solution was to

³⁰ Perold, “Historical notes”, p. 110. In his recapitulation, Perold indicated that only the returns for Stellenbosch, Malmesbury, Tulbagh, Worcester and Robertson were complete.

³¹ CA AMPT PUBS C/1/2/1/149 “Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings”.

³² Wessel Visser, “White settlement and irrigation schemes: CF Rigg and the founding of Bonnievale in the Breede River Valley, 1900–c.1953”, *New Contree* 68 (2013), p. 22. Lucerne added nitrogen to the soil. Interview with Abrie Bruwer, 16 October 2009.

³³ Visser, “White settlement”, p. 25.

construct a freshwater dam that could supply water during the dry months. The Zanddrift Irrigation Board raised the bank loan that eventually enabled the Brandvlei Dam (or Lake Marais) to be completed near Worcester in 1922. This investment, along with subsequent improvements, transformed the valley. As might have been predicted, the option to irrigate led to a marked increase in vineyard plantings, along with substantially higher yields, in Worcester and Robertson.

The third set of issues turned on the thorny issue of consumption. As has already been indicated, rural Afrikaners were not great imbibers of the wine they produced. In Cape Town and its surrounds, it was often claimed that the merchants had killed their own market. Through tied houses, they were able to keep prices artificially high and so, it was said, deterred people from drinking more wine. But an even greater threat resided in the temperance movement whose societal influence was second to none at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁴ The Temperance International, as we might reasonably call it, was a worthy successor to anti-slavery in the mid-nineteenth century. Temperance spawned a dense network of associations that spanned continents, linking the United States and Britain;³⁵ colonies of White settlements such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Natal and the Cape, but also encompassing India, British West Africa, South America and East Asia. The leading organization was the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which had its origins in the 'women's crusade' in Ohio in 1874, but went global shortly after its formation.³⁶ The International Order of Good Templars (IOGT), founded in the United States in the 1850s, was less prolific, but also managed to spread well beyond its original heartlands.³⁷ Finally, in the years after the

³⁴ The following draws substantially on Paul Nugent, "The temperance movement and wine farmers at the Cape: collective action, racial discourse, and legislative reform, c.1890–1965", *Journal of African History* 52 (3) 2011.

³⁵ Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), pp. 101–104, 196–199; Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "The globalization of alcohol and temperance from the gin craze to prohibition", in Carol Helstosky (ed.), *The Routledge History of Food* (London: Routledge, 2014).

³⁶ Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). By the 1920s, the WCTU had affiliates in more than 40 countries and operated across the British Empire. Ian R. Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Womans Empire: The Woman Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 2. See also Ian Tyrrell, "Women and temperance in international perspective: the World's WCTU, 1880s–1920s", in Susanna Barrows and Robin Room (eds.), *Drinking Behavior and Belief in Modern History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991).

³⁷ David M. Fahey, *Temperance and Racism: John Bull, Johnny Reb and the Good Templars* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

First World War, a renewed international campaign was launched by the World League Against Alcoholism (WLAA), which agreed a platform for cooperation with the WCTU.³⁸

The IOGT commenced operations at the Cape in 1873, and by the end of the 1890s it was reputed to have 10,000 members, with more than 12,000 additional members subscribing to the International Order of True Templars (IOTT), which had been created for a specifically ‘non-white’ membership.³⁹ The IOTT became a powerful force in the Eastern Cape, campaigning strongly against *utywala* (so called ‘kaffir beer’), whilst advancing the claim that European drinks threatened a weakening of the bonds of African society. At the same time, the IOTT provided an important vehicle for African nationalists who were keen to shed the paternalism of the White leadership.⁴⁰ The IOGT/IOTT remained formally distinct from the WCTU whose arrival at the Cape dates from a visit by Mary Leavitt during her world tour on behalf of the World Union in 1889.⁴¹ The first affiliates were established here, as well as in Natal and the Orange River Colony that same year, followed by the Transvaal two years later. After the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, these separate chapters merged into one national body.⁴² The latter remained in close touch with the World WCTU through the receipt of literature and visiting speakers and participation in the regular cycle of conventions in the USA.⁴³ The final body that is worthy of specific mention is the South African Temperance Alliance (SATA) that was established in 1893. SATA positioned itself as an umbrella body seeking to coordinate the efforts of the IOGT/IOTT, the WCTU and a multiplicity of church-based groupings – Methodist, Anglican, Baptist and Presbyterian.⁴⁴ The relationship between the White leadership of these bodies was close. The leading light in the IOGT,

³⁸ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 211.

³⁹ Jennifer Pearce, “The origins of the temperance movement in Cape Town in the 1880s” (BA Hons. long essay, History Department, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1985), p. 11. On the race issue, see Fahey, *Temperance*.

⁴⁰ Wallace G. Mills, “The roots of African nationalism in the Cape Colony: temperance 1866–1898”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13 (2) 1980.

⁴¹ On the significance of Leavitt’s tour, see Tyrrell, *Woman’s World*, p. 1.

⁴² I will simply refer to the WCTU from this point on, except where this would cause any ambiguity.

⁴³ Emilie Solomon, who served as president of the Cape WCTU and was national president from 1919 to 1925, was elected vice-president of the World WCTU from 1925 to 1931. Tyrrell, *Woman’s World*, p. 72.

⁴⁴ Rev. Cook was released by the Methodist Church in 1919 to become the chairman of SATA, a position he occupied until 1930 (Ruby Adendorff, “A Knight without Fear and without Reproach” (undated), typescript). I am grateful to A. T. McCutcheon for sharing this document and allowing me to view the other family documents in her possession.

Theophilus Schreiner, became a vice-president of SATA, while as a Member of Parliament (MP)⁴⁵ he counted on the vocal support of the WCTU. All three bodies attempted to keep their members abreast of global developments. The list of invited luminaries included no less a figure than William ‘Pussyfoot’ Johnson of the Anti-Saloon League who took time out from his campaign on behalf of the WLAA, in Europe and India, to tour Southern Africa with Rev. A. J. Cook in 1924.⁴⁶ Another was Bishop Cannon of the WLAA, who accepted an invitation from Cook and SATA to lend his weight to the campaign for Local Option.⁴⁷ At the same time, South African campaigners made their own temperance pilgrimages. Cook, for example, covered a swathe of the United States in 1920 to study the progress of Prohibition, and in 1928 he visited Britain on behalf of SATA.⁴⁸

The internationalism of the temperance movement contrasted with the more limited horizons of the farming community. Very few farmers had any direct experience of the wider world, although they kept abreast of developments in the European wine regions through the local press.⁴⁹ The topography of the winelands and generations of intermarriage meant that the perspective of many farmers focused on a particular valley or district.⁵⁰ Following the creation of the Afrikaner Bond in 1883, the interests of the wine farmers found a political outlet. But party structures were poorly institutionalized and MPs, who tended to be drawn from an urban elite, conducted themselves with patrician independence.⁵¹ Whereas the temperance movement (with the notable exception of IOTT in the Eastern Cape) tended to be urban, largely female and English-speaking, the wine farming communities were dominated by Afrikaner men who were mostly staunch adherents of one or other iteration of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). SATA purported to embrace an ecumenical vision, seeking to enlist not just Afrikaners, but also Muslims and Jews. But while SATA boasted Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman

⁴⁵ The name for the legislature shifted over the twentieth century. For reasons of simplicity, I will refer to the Parliament throughout.

⁴⁶ Cook and Johnson are said to have travelled 7,000 miles and to have addressed 55,000 people. CA A1696 “Women’s Christian Temperance Union”, File 98: Correspondence A-C (1913–1941), “A Brief History of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union in South Africa” (Cape Town, 1925), p. 35; Tyrrell, *Reforming*, p. 217.

⁴⁷ Tyrrell, *Reforming*, p. 215. Local Option had enabled temperance campaigners to turn large areas of America dry well in advance of Prohibition.

⁴⁸ A. T. McCutcheon, “Rev. A.J. Cook and temperance” (undated), typescript in Cooke papers, shared by author.

⁴⁹ They maintained an acquaintance with international events through the Afrikaner press. On the press and Afrikaner nationalism, see Hermann Giliomee, “Western Cape wine farmers and the beginnings of Afrikaner nationalism, 1870–1915”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14 (1) 1987, pp. 60–61.

⁵⁰ In 1878, a Wine Farmers Association was established to oppose an excise tax on brandy, but it did not endure.

⁵¹ J. L. McCracken, *The Cape Parliament, 1854–1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 50–51, 110–112; Giliomee, “Western Cape”.

as one of its vice-presidents, it was patently a vehicle for English-speaking Protestants.⁵² Although a solid body of the DRC was opposed to alcohol, there was lingering sensitivity about Anglophone domination that was reflected more broadly in campaigns to redress the marginalization of the Afrikaans language. Moreover, the fact that WCTU campaigned for a qualified but non-racial and gender-equal franchise, was not likely to endear it to many farmers.⁵³ But, by far, the greatest source of concern was its relentless targeting of the *dop* system. The temperance movement in South Africa could never have gone down the French route of strategic accommodation because the worst cases of chronic alcoholism emanated from the wine districts, where farmworkers were dependent on wine rather than brandy. The defence of the farmers was typically to fall back on the logic of paternalism – insisting that they had always exercised a moral responsibility for the welfare of their Coloured wards,⁵⁴ which included regulating daily access to liquor. In what follows, I now work through the three-way struggle for supremacy between the temperance movement, farmers and merchants.

A Glass Half-Empty or Half-Full?

The Battle over Consumption

At the turn of the century, the relationship between the temperance movement and the wine farmers became decidedly fractious. The farmers were sensitive to anything that might squeeze further life out of the internal market. In the context of mounting complaints about public drunkenness in Cape Town, however, temperance activists sought to persuade the authorities of the need to introduce stricter controls.⁵⁵ Their campaigns bore fruit in the Liquor Act of 1891, which included prison sentences for repeat convictions, and the introduction of Local Option provisions. The law required that applications for new licences be supported by a majority of voters for the relevant district council, and imposed a stipulation that licensing courts reject applications for renewal where two-thirds of voters in a district, municipality or ward signed a memorial objecting.⁵⁶ In an amendment of 1898, licensing courts were empowered to

⁵² On Abdurahman, see Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 205, 213.

⁵³ This is dealt with in detail in June McKinnon, “Women’s Christian Temperance Union: aspects of early feminism in the Cape, 1889–1930”, unpublished MA thesis, UNISA, 1995, ch. 4.

⁵⁴ In this text I refer to ‘White’, ‘Coloured’ and ‘Black’ – categories that are rooted in segregationist and apartheid discourse, but which are impossible to avoid using because they have meaning for the actors themselves. See the ‘Note on the Text’ on page vi for more detail about the history and use of this term in South Africa.

⁵⁵ Pearce, “Origins”, p. 14.

⁵⁶ Act to Amend the Law Relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors (Act 25 of 1891), published in Percy T. Jones (ed.), *The Liquor Laws of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope with Notes of Cases Decided Thereon* (Cape Town: Juta, 1907), pp. 89–91.

impose additional conditions on the sale of liquor to ‘natives’, while fresh restrictions were placed on the brewing of ‘kaffir beer’ in the rural areas.⁵⁷ At each stage, temperance activists instigated mass petitions and lobbied MPs. Indeed, the movement can be credited with transforming politics into the legitimate concern of a wider populace, most of which was formally excluded from the franchise at the time.⁵⁸

In 1905, SATA drew up a joint programme of action. The latter contained 11 action points, which can be collapsed into four for the sake of simplicity. The first was to apply pressure upon the Cape government to introduce a consolidated liquor law that would bring about ‘the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquor to the native races’ and a further reduction of access to alcohol by White people.⁵⁹ The second was to actively exploit the provisions of existing legislation, by attending licensing courts *en masse* and challenging the rubber-stamping of applications. The third was the furtherance of public education, combined with pressing the demand for temperance teaching in schools. The final aspect consisted of promoting ‘counter-attractions’ to the canteen.⁶⁰ The WCTU sponsored tea-rooms, coffee houses and outlets for the sale of wholesome fruit juices. The only concession to the embattled wine farmers was the contention that grapes could be used to produce healthy alternatives such as cordials, juices and *moskonfyt* (grape syrup).⁶¹ In 1909, SATA reported the willingness of certain farmers in Stellenbosch to cooperate in producing a bottled grape juice. Indeed, SATA even hired a tent at the Rosebank Show and encouraged visitors to sample a product called Golden Vintage that could be consumed mixed with water or soda water.⁶²

This renewed activism coincided with lobbying by distressed wine farmers and merchants for government intervention in their favour. In 1907, the year of the revolt in the Midi, a Colonial Wine-Farmers and Wine Merchant Association was formed. This came in the context of extremely volatile prices: whereas prices for quality wines in 1903 were higher than they had been since

⁵⁷ The Bill was sponsored by James Rose-Innes. The final Act defined a ‘native’ as ‘any Kafir, Fingo, Basuto, Damara, Hottentot, Bushman or Koranna’. See Act to Amend the Law Relating to the Sale of Liquor (Act No. 28 of 1898), article 5, in Jones, *Liquor Laws*, p. 111. The courts regarded physical appearance as crucial to determining whether someone was Coloured or ‘native’.

⁵⁸ The WCTU submitted 28 petitions in support of the 1898 Act (McKinnon, “Women’s Christian”, p. 114). White women did not acquire the full franchise until the Women’s Enfranchisement Act of 1930. A relatively small number of Coloured and African men who met the qualifications could vote.

⁵⁹ SATA singled out theatres, music halls and circuses for exclusion.

⁶⁰ The expression is borrowed from Harrison in relation to the pub. See Harrison, *Drink*, pp. 297–298.

⁶¹ The WCTU subsequently introduced an annual ‘Grape Day’.

⁶² CA AGR 498 C.65 “Grape Juice and Most Konfyt (1909–1911)”, “Golden Vintage” (pamphlet, 1909). W. C. Winshaw was one of those who agreed to explore the possibilities.

Table 1.3. *Average wine prices per leaguer, 1880–1907 (in £.shillings.pence)*

Year	Quality Wine	Inferior Wine
1880	£21.3.0	£11.10.0
1885	£8.3.0	£5.12.0
1890	£11.12.0	£8.6.0
1897	£12.0.0	£8.10.1
1898	£13.0.0	£8.18.1
1899	£10.8.0	£7.19.0
1900	£16.1.7	£11.6.0
1901	£14.15.0	£10.14.0
1902	£14.12.0	£10.13.0
1903	£23.3.0	£15.16.0
1904	£16.8.0	£10.7.0
1905	£27.15.0	£15.17.0
1906	£9.8.0	£6.3.0
1907	£8.6.0	£4.19.0

Source: Reworked from Scully, *Bouquet*, table 4, p. 40.

1875, they plummeted in 1907 to a third of what they had been the previous year, heralding a reprise of the hardships of the early 1890s (see Table 1.3). The chairman of the Association was C. W. H. Kohler, a farmer from the Drakenstein Valley, who had only recently left active parliamentary politics and was destined to play a dominant role in the decades to come.⁶³ C. F. Sedgwick, one of the principal wine merchants, was elected vice-chairman, underlining the extent to which the depression was hurting all sides. Whereas the temperance movement had managed to gradually reduce the supply of liquor over the previous decade, the wine lobby now attempted to reverse the flow. The association demanded a revision of the laws that inhibited wine sales and the appointment of a Select Committee to enquire into the state of the industry.⁶⁴ The following year, a private Light Wines Bill was brought to Parliament. This was designed to assist the farmers by lengthening the hours of sale and permitting them to sell wine from the farm-gate.⁶⁵ The temperance movement mobilized all its resources to assist Schreiner in fighting the Bill. The WCTU had previously enjoyed some success with written petitions, but now decided to embark on more direct action. Having collected signatures

⁶³ Annette Joelson (ed.), *The Memoirs of Kohler of the K.W.V.: Politician, Traveller, Founder of the South African Wine Industry* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1946).

⁶⁴ Joelson, *Memoirs*, p. 75.

⁶⁵ The Liquor Laws Licensing Act of 1883 had permitted the sale of light wines from grocery stores. McKinnon, "Women's Christian", p. 120.

under its Women's 1907 Temperance Campaign, the WCTU marched on Parliament where its leaders presented a petition, sparking an impromptu debate about whether their actions underlined or undermined the case for women's enfranchisement.⁶⁶ The unprecedented demonstration stung the wine farmers into mounting their own 'anti-temperance crusade' in Wellington.⁶⁷ This was a rare occasion on which the farmers prevailed. The final iteration of the Act permitted farmers and cooperatives to sell wine in volumes of not less than 4 gallons (18.2 litres) without a licence. Moreover, such sales could be made to Black consumers who were registered voters, as well as to Coloured ones – although not to the rest of the Black population for whom wine and brandy was prohibited.⁶⁸

In 1908 John X. Merriman became Prime Minister in association with the Afrikaner Bond, which had historically identified with the interests of the farmers.⁶⁹ Although a wine farmer himself, Merriman was critical of the tendency of most producers to place volume ahead of quality.⁷⁰ Moreover, he was unyielding over the demand that the government rescind the excise tax on wine. His reasoning was partly that measures designed to help the struggling farmers might merely provide an incentive to further boost production rather than engaging with more viable alternatives. Taking a leaf out of WCTU's book, the farmers decided to resort to more direct methods of persuasion. On 14 April 1909, Kohler led a demonstration of some 3,000 farmers and supporters onto the streets of Cape Town. This culminated in a mass meeting in City Hall, followed by what the *Cape Times* described as a 'howling demonstration on the steps of Parliament'.⁷¹ The farmers demanded an audience with Merriman, which he granted only grudgingly.⁷² In the heated exchanges that ensued, Kohler was scathing about the refusal of Merriman to make a firm commitment to assisting the farmers, and insisted that the underlying problem was not overproduction, but excessive regulation:

⁶⁶ Schreiner argued that this action provided the fitness of women to receive the vote. There was a second petition that presumably related to the franchise itself given that the enfranchisement of women was one of the main objectives of the WCTU. McKinnon, "Women's Christian", pp. 121–122.

⁶⁷ A large gathering at the town hall in Worcester passed a resolution condemning those who 'worked against their interests by attacking the only industry which would support the population of the Western Province'. "The wine farmers: anti-temperance crusade", *Cape Argus*, 9 September 1907.

⁶⁸ Act to Provide for the Sale without a Licence of Certain Liquors Made by Persons Engaged in Viticulture on Their Own Property (Act No. 8 of 1907) article 2, in Jones, *Liquor Laws*, p. 127.

⁶⁹ Giliomee, "Western Cape", pp. 44–48.

⁷⁰ Merriman owned Schoongezicht, which was originally part of the Rustenberg farm in Stellenbosch and is so today. Although McKinnon rightly observes that Merriman rejected the right of women to petition in chauvinistic terms, her claim that he treated the farmers preferentially is questionable. McKinnon, "Women's Christian", pp. 121–122.

⁷¹ The figure is cited in Van Zyl, *KWV*, p. 20.

⁷² "Wine farmer's demonstration: a great gathering", *Cape Times*, 15 April 1909.

If the same quantity of wine cannot be consumed to-day, it is clearly due to legislative enactments which have so restricted the dealings in your product that the consumption is less to-day than it was twenty-five years ago.⁷³

The specific demand was for the repeal of the excise duty, but Kohler was also making a thinly veiled reference to the pernicious influence of the temperance movement. In chiding Kohler, the *Cape Times* observed that J. H. Hofmeyr of the Afrikaner Bond, whom the farmers had been counting on for moral support, had himself cast doubt on the likelihood that ending the excise would make a material difference. He was also quoted as reflecting that consumption of alcohol had come ‘not only through the efforts of the temperance societies, your Abbeys and Theo. Schreiners . . . [but because] many who used to take their cordial at eleven o’clock and even with their lunch, are now satisfied with a cup of tea or coffee or beef tea’.⁷⁴ This implied that temperance campaigning had won genuine converts. The newspaper further cited Hofmeyr as pointing out that demand had once hinged on the sale of cheap alcohol to Black consumers in the eastern Cape. Given that nobody wanted a return to this ‘abominable traffic’, it was necessary for the farmers to be realistic. The report ended by pointing out that Merriman had already set up a Commission of Enquiry and had solicited expert advice from Lord Blyth, a British expert on the wine trade.⁷⁵

Part of Blyth’s remit was to investigate the temperance claim that Cape ‘light wines’ were high in alcohol, whilst simultaneously addressing the myriad problems that were holding the industry back.⁷⁶ Julie McKinnon quotes a *Cape Times* article that appeared to confirm Blyth’s opinion that Cape wines were indeed highly alcoholic, but in fact the thrust of his report was far from favourable to the temperance campaign. Referring specifically to concerns about drinking amongst the ‘coloured races’, he tackled standard objections head-on, citing evidence for the health benefits of wine consumption. Ironically, he invoked none other than William Gladstone, whose desire to promote good drinking wine as an alternative to stronger alcohol had killed the export market for Cape wines:

It would, I believe, be impossible for anybody, be he black or white, to become intoxicated by drinking Natural Wine, and all our great legislators, such as John Bright, Cobden, Disraeli and Gladstone, have recognised their health-giving properties

⁷³ This quote from the *South African News* is reproduced in Joelson, *Memoirs*, p.76. In an open letter the previous month, Kohler had claimed that drunkenness by Africans in the Cape was almost certainly lower than in New Zealand, which was held up as citadel of temperance virtue.

⁷⁴ “Wine farmer’s demonstration”.

⁷⁵ Blyth had married a daughter of the family of W. & A. Gilbey, which specialized in Cape wines until the end of colonial preference, when it diversified its portfolio and became a leading retailer of wines in Britain. Asa Briggs, *Wine for Sale: Victoria Wines and the Liquor Trade, 1860–1984* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 62, 68.

⁷⁶ McKinnon, “Women’s Christian”, p. 123.

and availed themselves of every opportunity of advocating their consumption on the score of temperance. There is no more sober nation than France, and yet with a total population of 40 millions the average consumption per head is considerably over one hundred bottles of Natural Wine per annum, and the feeling prevails to-day more strongly than ever, both in France and in England, that Natural Wines, rather than Beer or any other stimulant, are indispensable to the health of those of sedentary habits.⁷⁷

When it came to the market for Cape wines, Blyth's advice was to concentrate less on trying to break back into the British market and to look to alternatives across southern Africa. However, his report also maintained that the government could do more to assist the industry by boosting sales at home:

It seems to me that the future Government of the Union could render a great service to the Wine Industry of South Africa in setting an example by instituting a system whereby both Red and White Natural Wine of good marketable quality and in perfect maturity for consumption could be obtained at all railway stations and restaurant cars, or wherever the Government has jurisdiction, at a low fixed price per bottle, the same to bear the Government official stamp as a guarantee of genuineness.

Blyth's report was a rebuke to the temperance movement and provided some support for those demanding freer distribution.

For its part, the Commission of Enquiry into the Economic Condition of the Wine Districts confirmed that financial distress was rife. It observed that in the heartlands of Stellenbosch and Paarl, relatively few farms had been placed on the market, but only because these had been heavily mortgaged. In its view, there would likely have been a serious depreciation in property value if these farms had been sold on the basis of their current financial return.⁷⁸ On the other hand, it observed that 55 farmers in Robertson and Montagu had uprooted 500,000 vines. The implication was that if winemaking was confined only to the coastal areas, a solution might yet be found to the scourge of oversupply. Nevertheless, the Commission did not recommend active intervention by the government to steer the farmers down a more desirable path, and far less did it recommend financial subsidies to the producers.

In October 1909, the WCTU responded to the farmers' demands with a counter-march through Cape Town to express opposition to any dilution of the liquor laws.⁷⁹ However, with the consummation of the Union of South Africa

⁷⁷ CA AGR 498 C.67 "Cape Wine Commission and Lord Blyth's Report on Cape Wine Industry" (1909).

⁷⁸ It referred specifically to the case of a 300-morgen farm in the Paarl district, for which the owner had been offered £10,000 a few years earlier, but which had since changed hands for £3,500, and only then because the buyer had been willing to go beyond the effective market value of £2,500 to secure land for his sons. CA AMPT PUBS C/1/2/1/149 "Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings" (1909).

⁷⁹ McKinnon, "Women's Christian", p. 125.

in 1910, a temporary suspension of hostilities ensued. Thereafter, both sides were forced to adjust to the enlargement of the political arena that injected new sets of interests and perspectives into the political equation. The temperance movement had the most to gain from Union – certainly Schreiner believed so – because it became that bit easier to coordinate campaign strategies across the region. However, whereas English speakers had dominated the Cape legislature, the Union Parliament was certain to be controlled by Afrikaners.⁸⁰ Hence the WCTU and SATA needed to find a way of making common cause rather than presuming to speak for Afrikaners. This did not come naturally, as is reflected in the tardiness with which the WCTU adjusted to publication in the Afrikaans language.⁸¹ As for the wine farmers, their MPs now represented a relatively small group within Parliament who could not necessarily count on government backing when other vested interests were competing for attention. It became apparent, therefore, that they needed a strong collective voice outside of Parliament if they were to effectively neutralize the active propaganda of SATA and the WCTU.

After 1910, much of the effort of the WCTU was directed towards offering alternatives to alcohol for servicemen and policing the extension of liquor licences.⁸² Moreover, campaigners continued to draw attention to alcohol abuse amongst the Cape Coloured population. This culminated in the creation of the (Baxter) Select Committee in 1918, before which Schreiner made a plea for bringing Coloured people under the restrictive provisions of the 1898 Act, subject to a right of exemption for ‘respectable’ elements.⁸³ In addition, Schreiner attempted to pass a Direct Vote Bill that would have extended Local Option by transferring powers from licensing courts to communities. Predictably enough, Schreiner pointed an accusatory finger at the wine farmers when his Bill failed to pass. As for the latter, the lack of any functioning association impeded efforts to effect a change to the law in their favour. In 1912, Tielman Roos did endeavour to pass a Bill that would have permitted Black drinkers freer access to ‘kaffir beer’ and light wines and would have allowed coffee shops and boarding houses to apply for licences and extended the hours of sale.⁸⁴ The failure of this Bill led to farmers’ leaders shifting the emphasis away from an expansion of the market for wine towards seeking higher prices. This reduced some of the points

⁸⁰ In 1908, English speakers still made up 54 per cent of MPs. McCracken, *Cape Parliament*, table 3, p. 53.

⁸¹ Very little temperance material was translated into Afrikaans before the Second World War. Ruby Adendorff, one of the leaders of the WCTU, eventually published *Alkohol – Wat Dit is en Wat Dit Doen* (Paarl: WCTU, 1946).

⁸² McKinnon, “Women’s Christian”, pp. 92–94.

⁸³ This was the Select Committee on Drunkenness in the Western Districts of the Cape Province. The Baxter report recommended regulation rather than abolition of the dop system.

⁸⁴ McKinnon, “Women’s Christian”, p. 129.

of friction with the temperance lobby, but it increasingly pitted the farmers against their other great adversary, namely the merchants.

The Battle over Pricing: Wine Farmers against the Merchants

Temperance campaigners and wine farmers had recourse to a very similar rhetoric when criticizing what they regarded as noxious monopolies pervading the liquor trade. The former complained of an excess of canteens dispensing cheap wine, coupled with the monopolistic inclinations of the liquor firms. The WCTU and SATA both alleged that licensing courts deferred to vested interests and were rife with corruption. As for the farmers, a common complaint was that the merchants acquired wine at the lowest possible prices and sold it on to consumers at a lucrative mark-up. In his memoir, Kohler also claimed that the merchants were able to exploit a buyer's market by stockpiling supplies and then driving the hardest possible bargain at the end of the season when the farmers were desperate for money.⁸⁵ To some extent, these critiques of the merchants were contradictory: for temperance activists, wine was too cheaply available, while for farmers the price to the consumer was unjustifiably high. But both agreed that it was merchants who elevated crude profit above some conception of the greater good.

Some of the issues surrounding distribution had been specifically addressed by the 1909 Commission. The latter estimated that 'fully 70 per cent of licensed houses (exclusive of bottle stores) are tied or controlled by breweries or wholesale wine and spirit merchants'.⁸⁶ One consequence was that there was often a preference for the sale of imported spirits over Cape brandy. Another was that tied houses tended to increase the cost of wine and brandy to the consumer:

Owing largely to the tied house system . . . the Commission finds that the product of the viticulturalist has generally to pass through two, and in some cases three middlemen ere it reaches the consumer's hands, with a corresponding increase in the price which the consumer has to pay.

However, as with the dop system, identifying a set of abuses was one thing, while bringing them to an end was quite another. Hence the question of cartels in the liquor trade remained unresolved during the first decade after Union.

The First World War brought renewed difficulties for farmers, as prices plummeted to an average of £2.10 to £3 per leaguer between 1915 and 1917.⁸⁷ This served to reinvigorate efforts to found an association to represent the

⁸⁵ Joelson, *Memoirs*, p. 83.

⁸⁶ CA AMPT PUBS C/1/2/1/149 "Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings".

⁸⁷ *Wine Commission*, p. 8.

interests of wine farmers. What Kohler envisaged was the formation of a cooperative society that could bargain with the merchants over the price to be paid for wine. In 1916, a planning meeting was held, and in November 1917 the Constitution of the KWV was signed. In 1918, the KWV was formally registered as a company in the absence of any legislation providing for the formal registration of cooperatives at that time. With a membership of 1,807 farmers by April of that year, the KWV seemed to have gained widespread initial acceptance. In his memoirs, Kohler claimed that '(W)e had great difficulty in getting the merchants to join us and accept our Constitution. They kicked hard against the co-operative movement and would have nothing to do with it.'⁸⁸ He also maintained that the KWV forced the merchants to the bargaining table by threatening to enter distillation in competition with them. In fact, the firms were not averse to dealing with a single farmers' association. In November 1917, the Board of Sedgwick passed a resolution approving the principle of fixing a 'reasonable minimum price' for wine, for disposing of the surplus and for taking measures to prevent the sale of wine below the agreed price. Its policy was to adopt 'a reasonably sympathetic but non-committal attitude'.⁸⁹ In addition, the firm decided to not enter into any fresh contracts with farmers pending the inauguration of the KWV. Furthermore, a number of the leading merchants, including Sedgwick, agreed to seek an arrangement with the KWV, provided the latter could secure control over at least 80 per cent of total production and provided the firms of E. K. Green & Co. and H. C. Collison's came on board.⁹⁰ But attacking the liquor firms, much like targeting the mining companies,⁹¹ was guaranteed to secure a sympathetic audience.

In the first year, the KWV and the merchants managed to come to terms. The merchants agreed to pay a minimum price of £4.15s for distilling wine and £5.5s for 'good' (or drinking) wine.⁹² The KWV passed this price on to the farmers, less 10s on each leaguer of wine and a pro rata deduction for wine that was estimated to be surplus to the requirements of the trade. Both parties were conscious of the need to maintain internal discipline: if the farmers agreed to supply firms at beneath the minimum price, there was a likelihood that both the KWV and the newly formed merchants' association would unravel. In 1918, the actual price for wine fluctuated between £4.15s and £6.10s per leaguer for

⁸⁸ He made an exception of Mr Jooste of Jooste and Bryant who even made a loan to the KWV. Joelson, *Memoirs*, p. 88. The KWV was distinct from the cooperative wineries.

⁸⁹ Distell Archive, "The House of Sedgwick" (unpublished typescript, 1951), p. 29.

⁹⁰ "House of Sedgwick", p. 31.

⁹¹ Boonzaier's cartoon image of Hoggeneimer, representing a fictitious Jewish mining magnate, became a regular feature in *Die Burger*. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 331. There was no liquor equivalent, but the over-representation of Jews in the trade did not go unnoticed.

⁹² The firms which signed up were the major players, notably E. K. Green, Castle Wine and Brandy Co, H. C. Collison's, J. Sedgwick & Co. and the Van Ryn Wine and Brandy Co. Van Zyl, *KWV*, p. 26.

distilling wine, while the price for good wine inched up to around £8.⁹³ With a return to relative optimism, farmers began to replant their vineyards. Whereas there were estimated to be 86.9 million vines in the Cape Province in 1918, this had risen to 101.2 million in 1921. The volume of wine produced also rose steeply from 96,750 leaguers (559,215 hl.) to a high of 128,473 leaguers (742,574 hl.), which rather gave the lie to Kohler's earlier claims that overproduction was not an issue.⁹⁴

In 1920, responding to rumours of a short vintage, the firm of W. C. Winshaw secretly signed contracts with as many farmers as it could, in effect undercutting the compact between the KWV and the larger firms. Winshaw then announced that he controlled 60 per cent of the harvest and invited the other merchants to join him in a combine. The latter spurned the offer, and some like Castle Wine and Brandy Co. decided to actively compete, thereby pushing prices to a level where farmers began turning every kind of grape into cheap wine.⁹⁵ The anticipated shortfall was thereby transformed into a veritable glut overnight. As the firms attempted to divest themselves of excess stocks, prices suddenly plummeted. A number of companies were bankrupted in 1920, including W. C. Winshaw and Myburgh, Krone & Co. The companies that had been more cautious or were better capitalized, notably Sedgwick, Castle Wine and Brandy Co., Paarl Wine and Brandy Co. and Van Rhyn's survived and bought up the assets of those that had failed.⁹⁶ This shakeout further exemplified a long-term tendency towards concentration in the liquor industry.

The reaction on the part of chastened farmers and merchants alike was to renegotiate a price agreement. The leading merchants formed the South African Wine and Spirit Corporation with a view to eliminating the competitive bidding that had landed them in trouble. At the same time, the KWV, which had decided to try to take control over the 1921 and 1922 vintages, saw an advantage in price stability. The terms of the new agreement were that the merchants would pay £9 per leaguer (£1.56 per hl.) for distilling wine and £11 (£1.90 per hl.) for good wine to the KWV, which would pay the farmers at £3 a leaguer (£0.52 per hl.) for distilling wine, supplemented with an additional £2 (£0.35 per hl.) premium for good wine. The difference between the sale price and what the farmer received reflected the quantity of wine that was surplus to the trade, which the KWV was mandated to dispose of. Between 1921 and 1923, no less than 27.9 per cent of total wine production, for which

⁹³ *Wine Commission*, p. 9. 'Good wine' referred to wine that was intended for drinking rather than distillation.

⁹⁴ *Wine Commission*, p. 9.

⁹⁵ The Wine Commission cites a figure of £30 per leaguer (£5.19 per hl.). *Wine Commission*, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Castle Wine and Brandy Co. acquired Collison's, while Jooste and Bryant from Johannesburg acquired Sedgwick & Co. Distell Archive, "House of Sedgwick", p. 18.

no use could be found, was physically destroyed.⁹⁷ The logic underpinning the agreement was that prices would not be pushed upwards by rampant speculation but would reflect the level of effective demand. This was reassuring for the nervous merchants. Equally by disposing of the surpluses, the KWV ensured that the market was not ruined by chronic over-supply. This was a crucial guarantee for the struggling wine farmers. But the balancing act was only likely to work if merchants were not tempted to seek supplies at a lower price and if the KWV could find some way of reducing the overall surplus – whether by actively discouraging the farmers from producing more or by finding new markets that did not step on the toes of the merchants.

In reality, both parties experienced acute problems in disciplining their members. In 1922, Sedgwick broke away from the Corporation, thereby signalling a return to competition between the merchants. Although the other firms remained formally committed to their agreement with the KWV, it was alleged that certain of them began to cut secret deals. On the other hand, many farmers believed that the KWV was creaming off too much for itself. The higher-quality producers in Constantia, in particular, insisted that the surplus disposal should not apply to ‘good’ wine and they should receive the full price handed down by the merchants. Indeed, one of them successfully took the KWV to court over the issue.⁹⁸ With increasing numbers signalling their intention to resign from the KWV, the leadership struggled to prevent the association from unravelling. As Kohler indicated in his autobiography, some time was bought by means of a mixture of cunning, subterfuge and sheer bluff. When the KWV was registered under the Co-operative Societies Act of 1922, it was able to insert a clause that bound all members to the surplus arrangements. However, when the merchants declared their own intention to withdraw from the pricing agreement, the KWV realized that its strategy was in deep trouble. The only solution appeared to be to solicit government support for underwriting a system of statutory control. From such chaotic origins was the Leviathan of regulation born.

In his official history of the KWV, Diko Van Zyl observes that while Kohler claimed credit for what subsequently transpired, it was Charlie Heatlie, KWV director and South African Party (SAP) MP for Worcester, who approached Jan Smuts, as he was about to travel to the United Kingdom, with a proposal for devolving regulatory powers to the KWV.⁹⁹ Smuts signalled that he was prepared to oblige, provided such an initiative enjoyed the support of the

⁹⁷ Joelson, *Memoirs*, p. 92. No fewer than 91,656 leaguers (15,857 hl.) were destroyed between 1921 and 1923, 39,830 (6,891 hl.) of them in 1923 itself. Figures from *Wine Commission*, p. 9.

⁹⁸ The association lost two court cases against its own members who disputed the applicability of the surplus contributions to good wine and the right of the directors to enforce compliance. Van Zyl, *KWV*, pp. 36–37.

⁹⁹ Van Zyl, *KWV*, pp. 45–49.

majority of KWV members and as long as the NP did not turn the enabling legislation into a partisan affair in Parliament. Leading figures within the KWV brokered discussions between SAP and NP politicians, and only when a deal was in the offing did they inform Kohler. When Smuts arrived back at Cape Town docks, the KWV directors were able to present Smuts with detailed proposals. The prime minister agreed to personally bring a Bill to Parliament at the earliest opportunity rather than postponing a decision until the following season.

When he stood up to introduce the second reading of the Wine and Spirits Control Bill, Smuts acknowledged the storm that the proposed legislation had provoked: 'Judging from the daily press and the letters and communications which have appeared in it, I am afraid that I have put my head into a hornet's nest.' He also mused that:

Discussion of wine produces almost as much heat as the consumption of wine. I therefore appeal to hon. members to approach this dangerous subject in a good temper. It is a difficult one; it is one involving not only large principles but large interests . . .¹⁰⁰

During the subsequent debate, the leader of the opposition, J. B. M. Hertzog, did not register any objections other than to urge the appointment of a Select Committee to thrash out the details. But the proposal was vigorously attacked by MPs from both sides of the house. Smuts conceded that many of the criticisms of the KWV were valid but insisted that it was better for government to support the industry in putting its own house in order rather than exercising direct control. In this, he was repeating a line that had once belonged to Merriman. This made little impression on opponents of the Bill who pointed out that if the industry was truly to be self-regulating, then logically both the farmers and the merchants should be involved. Morris Alexander even went as far as to label it a 'Bolshevist Bill' intended 'to take away everybody's rights and interests in the wine and spirits industry'.¹⁰¹

Predictably, Smuts' most vocal supporter in Parliament was Heatlie, who had only just ceased being a KWV director, and whose fingerprints were all over the legislation. One MP explicitly took up the case against the merchants on the basis that a couple of companies, which also owned the hotels and 'canteens', were able to maximize the difference between the price paid to the farmers and the sale price.¹⁰² The MPs who were sympathetic to the merchants

¹⁰⁰ Jan Smuts, Prime Minister, moving second reading of the Wine and Spirits Control Bill, 6 February 1924, Union of South Africa, Debates of the House of Assembly (Cape Town: Cape Times, Parliamentary Printers, various years), p. 105 [hereinafter *Assembly Debates*].

¹⁰¹ M. Alexander, MP for Cape Town-Castle, *Assembly Debates*, 6 February 1924, p. 112.

¹⁰² He claimed that farmers received 4d. a bottle for wine that was sold by E. K. Green at 2 shillings. J. W. Roux, MP for Ceres, *Assembly Debates*, 8 February 1924, p. 146.

regarded the legislation as pandering to the narrow interests of the KWV leadership. No less fierce was the criticism that emanated from the ranks of the wealthier producers. Prominent farmers in Constantia had long opposed regulation, arguing that this was tantamount to rewarding the producers of low-quality wine. M. Bisset, the SAP MP for South Peninsula, which included Constantia, maintained that the system of surplus control in effect meant that the makers of good wine ended up subsidizing the producers of ‘absolute muck’:

In that particular year that I am dealing with, the price for good wine was £11 a leaguer, and if they were liable for surplus contribution they would have to pay two-thirds of that which would have left the maker of ‘good wine’ £9 per leaguer. People I represent in Constantia say it is almost impossible to make good wine at that rate. They say their cost is very much higher than elsewhere, and in some parts you get three times as many leaguers from a given number of ‘sticks’ as you do at Constantia.¹⁰³

Bisset reminded the House that the Constantia farmers had won a court case over the issue, but that the KWV had changed its constitution when the Co-operative Act of 1922 came into force to nullify the judgement and render it difficult for farmers to leave.

The context was a shift in the balance of forces within the KWV towards the producers of distilling wine *anderkant die berg*.¹⁰⁴ Major Van Zyl made the point that regulation was a slippery slope because it might merely increase the tendency towards overproduction:

We make 135,000 or 150,000 leaguers of wine per annum, while the consumption in the Union is 80,000–90,000 leaguers, which means we are at the present paying for the 140,000 leaguers to consume 80,000, and with regular increasing production this means that at the end of three years we shall be led into a most serious position, for the surplus will be enormous; and what are we going to do then? . . . The whole of the community will have to suffer for the farmers who make bad wine, and what are we going to gain by it?¹⁰⁵

Although these figures were not terribly accurate, the most compelling indictment of the KWV was that it had done nothing to check the hike in production. In 1918, when the association was founded, the total vintage was equivalent to 96,750 leaguers (559,215 hl.) while in 1923 it stood at 110,544 leaguers (638,944 hl.).¹⁰⁶ Although Smuts had made it clear that the government was prepared to make exceptions for drinking wine, Bisset insisted that this did not resolve the issue of whether the quality producers would be subjected to the

¹⁰³ M. Bisset, *Assembly Debates*, 8 February 1924, p. 145.

¹⁰⁴ Literally ‘on the other side of the mountain’, but a shorthand for the Breede River Valley.

¹⁰⁵ These estimates were not particularly accurate. Maj. G. B. Van Zyl, Cape Town-Harbour, *Assembly Debates*, 6 February 1924, p. 120.

¹⁰⁶ *Wine Commission*, p. 9.

KWV regime and forced to participate in the surplus contribution. Another MP underlined the conflicting interests between producers in the different districts which was fast becoming a significant political issue:

There are many farmers in Caledon, Stellenbosch, Paarl and nearby that make good classes of wine and they receive £6 for their wine, which is the nominal worth, but they have to give £3 to the co-operative; but the man who is sitting on the other side of the mountain can simply let the wine flow; I say that what happens is an encouragement for the production of the lowest classes and quality of wine.¹⁰⁷

This MP was the only one to raise specifically the impact of restrictive liquor laws, noting the difficulties even for White people of acquiring wine in a restaurant. During the debate, the KWV was roundly criticized for managing its affairs so poorly. J. H. H. De Waal even alleged that Kohler and other directors had cut their own private deals with the merchants so that they would be excluded from the terms of any pricing arrangement by virtue of the fact that they had been made before the Bill.¹⁰⁸ Smuts was forced to concede that the wine industry had been its own worst enemy, and in some respects his assessment was just as damning as that of Bisset:

A good deal of the stuff we produce to-day is not fit for distillation, and to use a vulgar expression, is only fit for the gutter, and the result is that a natural industry is in a very parlous condition. Another danger, owing to our having gone in more for brandy and neglecting the wine production, a tendency in this country is to drink less wine – the market, even in South Africa does not expand, and we have the danger, and it is difficult to pull an industry like this out of the mire. To my mind, if ever there was a case for regulating an industry, which is to some extent absurd, and which is also over-produced in large quantities, it seems to me the very article should be subject to regulations.¹⁰⁹

However, Smuts was also desirous of keeping the state at one remove from the regulatory process.

Only one pro-temperance MP spoke in the debate, and that was Will Stuart, a self-professed ‘prohibitionist’ and relative of Schreiner, who actually supported the prime minister on the basis that the Bill was likely to lead to the production of less harmful forms of brandy.¹¹⁰ The silence of Dr. D. F. Malan was deafening, given his leadership of the temperance campaign in Parliament (see below). This striking failure to line up on the side of those who claimed to be advancing the cause of quality wine, whilst stemming the flood of distilling

¹⁰⁷ Le Roux van Niekerk, *Assembly Debates*, 8 February 1924, p. 121.

¹⁰⁸ De Waal claimed that Kohler had signed an agreement for 10 years with the firm of E. K. Green to sell wine at £14 per leaguer. J. H. H. De Waal, MP for Piquetberg, *Assembly Debates*, 6 February 1924, p. 118.

¹⁰⁹ Jan Smuts, *Assembly Debates*, 6 February 1924, p. 106.

¹¹⁰ W. H. Stuart, MP for Tembuland, *Assembly Debates*, 8 February 1924, p. 148. The Bill required brandy to be matured for three years.

wine, is at first surprising because temperance advocates were concerned about the health and social effects of spirits. It is possible that the pro-temperance MPs simply wished to visit a plague on both houses. But there are three more likely reasons why they remained silent and ultimately voted with Smuts across party lines. One is that they may have hoped for reciprocal support for Local Option legislation that stopped short of prohibition. Another is that in the eyes of the anti-liquor lobby, the real enemies were the wine merchants whose growing economic might threatened to make alcohol more cheaply available through a greater number of outlets. If the net effect of empowering the KWV was to push up the purchase price of alcohol, that might have a depressing effect on consumption. Finally, the fact that Smuts and Hertzog had come to a backroom deal meant that senior Nationalist MPs who broadly favoured temperance were not prepared to rock the boat.

Following criticism of the Bill, the sting was taken out of the opposition through a resort to two expedients. Despite his initial reluctance, Smuts gave way to demands for the appointment of a Select Committee to thrash out some of the serious points in contention. This enabled the producers of 'good' wine to advance their case, which culminated in drinking wine being specifically excluded from the legislation. In addition, Gerald Jooste from Sedgwick & Co. was able to present the case for the merchant community. Secondly, and in parallel, Smuts succeeded in bringing the KWV and the merchants to the bargaining table. The merchants agreed to accept the role of the KWV in controlling the price of distilling wine and to deal with the surplus, in return for a guarantee that the KWV would not enter the retail trade directly. The amended Bill required the KWV to sell to bona fide distillers or merchants.¹¹¹ The merchants also agreed to terminate the contracts they had already made for the coming year, with personal pressure being applied to Castle Wine and Brandy Co. by Smuts.¹¹² The KWV clearly received the better end of the bargain, and while there remained significant criticism of the legislation, the Wine and Spirits Control Act duly passed through Parliament. The future of the KWV was apparently secure. However, this merely brought the issue of consumption back into focus.

Liquor Control Redux: Temperance Campaigning and the 1928 Liquor Act

In the early 1920s, the triumph of Prohibition in the United States following the passage of the Volstead Act, brought liquor to the forefront of public debate. Although few imagined that South Africa would suddenly 'turn dry',

¹¹¹ Statement by Smuts at committee stage, *Assembly Debates*, 27 February 1924, p. 488.

¹¹² Van Zyl, *KWV*, p. 56.

the temperance movement turned its attention to Local Option as a halfway house towards outright prohibition. The pre-eminent Parliamentary champion was Dr. D. F. Malan, the future prime minister of South Africa. Malan's father had been the owner of the Allesverloren wine farm in the Swartland, but hardly any wine or brandy was consumed there.¹¹³ Ownership ultimately passed to his brother, S. F. Malan, in part because his father did not consider that he possessed the necessary business acumen. D. F. Malan instead studied theology and became a dominee, or DRC minister, before turning his hand to journalism and politics. He later recalled that his conversion to the temperance cause came during his duties tending to the flock in rural Montagu when he witnessed the devastation wrought by drink on the Coloured population.¹¹⁴ Malan introduced a Local Option Bill in 1923 that was opposed by many MPs as a slippery slope to prohibition. Morris Alexander, for example, pointed out that the law already provided for a version of Local Option, given that licensing courts were required to withhold licences if two-thirds of the rate-payers objected. The Bill was narrowly defeated, as it was in the following year when Malan re-introduced it.¹¹⁵ These near-misses brought home the importance of mobilizing public support so that wavering MPs would be more inclined to back the Bill when it resurfaced.

It was partly in response to the Parliamentary debates that SATA sponsored a conference on 'The Drink Problem in South Africa' in Cradock – historically a prominent temperance town – the aim of which was to advance the case for Local Option. Papers were read that dealt with the experience of local option in far-flung realms of the Empire like Scotland, Canada and New Zealand, as well as with the record of Prohibition in the United States. This underlines the extent to which the South African activists imagined themselves as marching in step with a global movement. Hence Rev. A. J. Cook rather optimistically claimed that South Africa 'had caught the spirit of the age' and was destined to become a global leader in the fight for temperance.¹¹⁶ Rev. A. W. Eckard acknowledged that 'the wine farmers are, without exception, opposed to Local Option', which he attributed to fears concerning the loss of their livelihood. But since the American experience demonstrated that there were paying alternatives to wine, he argued, there was a realistic basis for cooperation.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ The farm was dedicated to production of a version of port wine. Wine proper was only drunk on special occasions. Interview with Danie Malan, 2 November 2009.

¹¹⁴ "Echo from the Past – Extract from an Address by the Hon. D.F. Malan, Stellenbosch 1912", Stellenbosch University Document Centre.

¹¹⁵ Malan lost the vote by nine votes in 1923. *Cape Times*, 16 March 1923.

¹¹⁶ Rev. A. J. Cook, "The American experiment and its meaning for South Africa", in *The Drink Problem in South Africa: Addresses and Papers Delivered at the Local Option Congress Held at Cradock on December 5th and 6th, 1923* (Cape Town: SATA, 1924), p. 99.

¹¹⁷ Rev. A. W. Eckard, "Local option and the wine farmer", in *Drink Problem*, pp. 124–125.

The president of the WCTU, Emilie Solomon, spoke on the effects of alcohol on the home and on infant mortality, and finished with a remarkable flourish concerning the effects upon racial vitality.¹¹⁸ Rev. W. J. Naude of the DRC contrived to find the hand of God working through medical research, which demonstrated the devastating effects of alcohol on the human body:

By natural science, and especially by medical science, the Lord is teaching us more and more that alcohol is injurious and unnecessary for the human body . . . [and] that so far from being a direct gift of God, it is nothing less than a distinct poison, and must be regarded as such and avoided.¹¹⁹

He also claimed that the Bible had been mistranslated and that references to the drinking of wine referred to a non-alcoholic grape syrup, in effect turning the wedding at Cana into a kind of temperance gathering. Finally, Dr. J. Van Schalkwyk offered a lengthy medical treatise, and repeated the assertion that ‘alcohol must not be regarded as an enjoyment or as a food, but as a poison or a medicine which may be prescribed to patients under proper supervision.’¹²⁰ The congress finished by passing a number of resolutions. One advocated forging better links with the DRC. Another proposed sending a letter to farmers’ leaders expressing ‘friendly greetings’ and urging cooperation around the production of non-alcoholic beverages.¹²¹

Much like the rival demonstrations in Cape Town in 1909, the Cradock congress galvanized the defenders of wine into staging a rival meeting in Paarl in May 1924. The formal agenda was that of promoting moderation, but the gathering was clearly intended as a broadside against the Local Option campaign. It was addressed by an impressive list of luminaries that included A. I. Perold; Louis Leipoldt, the doctor and poet; W. C. Winshaw, the merchant who went on to found the SFW; and a couple of churchmen. But while the speakers were all wine advocates, no farmers’ representatives actually spoke, possibly because the KWV was otherwise preoccupied. The closest approximation was Perold, who was by then South Africa’s pre-eminent expert.¹²² In his contribution, Perold argued for the benefits of moderate consumption and attacked Local Option as the thin end of the wedge:

¹¹⁸ “One of the greatest problems in our country is how to keep the white races efficient and fit to take their part in the uplift of the less advanced races of this vast sub-continent. Drink is the greatest cause of race deterioration . . .”, Miss E. Solomon, “Alcohol and the home”, in *Drink Problem*, p. 60.

¹¹⁹ Rev. W. J. Naude, “The Bible and alcohol”, in *Drink Problem*, p. 19.

¹²⁰ His lumping of tea and coffee with other ‘substances’ like cocaine, tobacco, morphine and alcohol raised doubts about the WCTU’s promotion of alternatives to alcohol. J. Van Schalkwyk, “The medical aspect of the drink problem”, in *Drink Problem*, p. 53.

¹²¹ Resolutions in *Drink Problem*, p. 176.

¹²² Perold was instrumental in the meeting and the subsequent publication. He moved to the KWV in 1928.

Some opponents of drunkenness believe that the principle of moderation is not sufficiently effective to fight the abuse of liquor successfully; and therefore they plead for total prohibition, as it is now generally called. Their favourite means to this end is the fine-sounding term 'local option' which aims at the local total prohibition of the sale of liquor in order to make the whole country gradually dryer and dryer, until as a whole, it will be ripe for total prohibition. Everyone who is against total prohibition should therefore also oppose this local option, the more so as its supporters, as recently happened at the Cradock conference, no longer hide the fact that their final goal is prohibition.¹²³

Perold recalled that when he had challenged 'Pussyfoot' Johnson on the record of Prohibition, pointing out that increased prices were due to the fact that Californians were making wine in their own homes, the campaigner had been unwilling to admit the truth. Perold concluded that '*this looks uncommonly like intentionally misleading an unsuspecting public*' (emphasis in original).¹²⁴

Professor E. E. Van Rooyen from the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch gleefully shot holes in the assertion that Biblical wine was unfermented and maintained that the Bible was clear about the lawfulness of alcohol consumption. In his words, 'The principle of moderation is Scriptural and therefore Christian.'¹²⁵ Legislating against wine, he reasoned, took away the moral obligation on the individual to actively practise moderation. The same point was made even more forcefully by Rev. Harrington Johnson who, in a speech entitled 'Why I am not a Prohibitionist', insisted that 'prohibition is based on a non-Christian view of the world'. This insistence on the thinking Christian subject was at least as compelling as the notion that there was a scriptural embargo, especially when the Biblical texts appeared to indicate the exact opposite. As probably the only American present at the meeting, Winshaw drew attention to the failure of Prohibition in the United States and presented South Africans with the following dire spectre:

Could sunny South Africa become a nursery of fanatics, paring down the joys of life with perhaps two and a half hypocrites to a family – one awful vast Kansas? Let us rather climb the golden stairs before our time than to live under such gloom – and probably have to pay heavily for it into the bargain, in increased taxes, first to make good the loss to revenue due to prohibition, and afterwards to raise every year more and more money to pay for the increasing cost of enforcement which fails to enforce.

But perhaps the most subversive refutation of the Cradock declaration came from Leipoldt, who made a case for consumption based on medical evidence:

¹²³ Perold assumed joint responsibility for seeing the papers through to publication. A. I. Perold, "The social aspect of the liquor problem", in *Wine and Drunkenness: The Social Problem of the Day* (Cape Town, 1924), p. 162.

¹²⁴ Perold, "Social aspect", p. 166.

¹²⁵ W. C. Winshaw, "The effect of Prohibition in America", in *Wine and Drunkenness*, p. 10.

Alcohol is a normal constituent of blood. Every bit of sugar, every bit of starch we eat as food, must be changed into alcohol before the body can make use of it. This is also precisely what the body does . . . The time occupied by the change of alcohol to acetic acid is very brief and this accounts for the relatively small amounts of free alcohol that we find in the human blood. But that such free alcohol actually does exist in the blood is now no longer doubted in the least.¹²⁶

Far from being a poison, he insisted, alcohol was wired into the very physiology of human beings. He then clinched the argument by pointing out that moderate consumption of alcohol was an aid to digestion and contained vital nutrients. He concluded by declaring that: ‘I therefore consider it our duty to encourage the use of light wines.’¹²⁷

With these opening salvos duly exchanged, the debate returned to the Parliament floor. In February 1924, Leslie Blackwell introduced the latest version of the Local Option Bill, having paid tribute to D. F. Malan’s previous unsuccessful efforts.¹²⁸ He rehearsed the argument about endemic drunkenness amongst the Cape Coloured population, and added the threat to the welfare of ‘poor whites’. He also restated the supposed failings of the licensing courts. Confirming Perold’s assessment, Blackwell observed that while the time was not ripe for the introduction of prohibition, the creation of ‘a few dry patches’ would ‘set in motion a process of becoming dry’, leading eventually to the dry areas outnumbering the wet and the creation of a public mood favouring outright prohibition. He was unapologetic, stating that, ‘I am a prohibitionist and I see in this Bill the half-way house to prohibition, and I believe it will pave the way ultimately for going dry.’ Such forthrightness provoked a ferocious response from MPs representing wine-farming constituencies, who warned that they could not be expected to vote for such legislation. Tielman Roos was especially emphatic, adding that the Bill was anachronistic given that Smuts had only just introduced legislation intended to assist the wine farmers.¹²⁹ After a passionate debate, the Bill narrowly failed to carry the necessary support, losing on this occasion by 53 to 51 votes.

Shortly thereafter, Parliament was dissolved, and Smuts took the country to a general election which he proceeded to lose. When Parliament reconvened in 1924, an alliance between the National and Labour parties commanded a

¹²⁶ C. Louis Leipoldt, ‘The medical aspect of the moderate consumption of alcohol’, in *Wine and Drunkenness*, p. 120. Leipoldt was a genuine polymath. He wrote on the subject of diet and critiqued both temperance thinking and vegetarianism. Controversially for South Africa, he also maintained that it was perfectly acceptable to give light wine to healthy children at dinner. C. Louis Leipoldt, *Common-Sense Dietetics* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1911), p. 148.

¹²⁷ Leipoldt, *300 Years*, p. 135.

¹²⁸ Strangely, Blackwell’s autobiography makes no mention of his leadership in the anti-liquor debates. Leslie Blackwell, *Blackwell Remembers: The Memoirs of the Hon. Leslie Blackwell Q.C., M.C.* (London: Howard Timmins, 1971), pp. 47–48.

¹²⁹ Tielman Roos, *Assembly Debates*, 7 February 1924, column 129.

majority and Smuts was consigned to the opposition benches. Within the Pact Government Roos assumed the Justice portfolio, while Malan became the Minister of Interior, Public Health and Education. It was now Roos who made the running, but in a rather different direction from Malan. In 1925, a private Local Option Bill was introduced for the fourth year in succession but it failed by a wider margin, which confounds any simple notion that Nationalists were naturally more disposed towards temperance. It now fell to Roos to table legislation that would consolidate the liquor laws, a demand that had been repeatedly made since Union in 1910. Introducing his draft Liquor Bill in September 1926, Roos went on the offensive by openly criticizing the temperance campaigners as 'self-appointed reformers'. In particular, he singled out a public protest that had been called by the temperance lobby to oppose his Bill.¹³⁰

The Bill conceded something to both wine-farming interests and the temperance lobby, but at the risk of alienating both. On the one hand, Roos proposed an extension of the dop system to the Transvaal, on the basis that outright prohibition for Black people had proved a singular failure and that it would help to stem the drift of labour to the cities. In addition, his Bill envisaged government canteens through which liquor could be made available to 'non-whites' under controlled conditions. Part of the intention was evidently to expand the market for 'light wines', a longstanding demand that Roos had previously championed. The Bill conspicuously omitted a Local Option clause and went further by excluding teetotallers from serving on licensing boards. This was a very direct affront to temperance campaigners. Finally, White people were to be permitted to purchase wine and beer from cafés and restaurants without complicated licensing restrictions. But to balance the ticket, the Bill was supposed to phase out licences for stand-up canteens over a five-year period. The Bill would have permitted Coloured people in the Cape to drink in licensed canteens in the interim, while banning them from purchasing off-sales alcohol, thereby addressing some of the concerns about liquor abuse over weekends in rural areas. Crucially, all Black people in the Cape were to forfeit the right to freely purchase 'European alcohol', regardless of whether they qualified to be on the voters' register. Roos had already pre-empted the debate by announcing that the Bill would be referred to a Select Committee. Over the next two years, the WCTU and SATA kept up sustained pressure through petitions and public meetings, targeting aspects of the 'Roos Bill' that they deemed unacceptable. The draft that returned to Parliament in 1927 was shorn of its more liberal aspects and reflected much more of the temperance agenda. While Blackwell continued to oppose

¹³⁰ He further lamented the waste of Parliamentary time resulting from repeated attempts at legislating for Local Option. Tielman Roos, Minister of Justice, introducing second reading of Liquor Bill. *Assembly Debates*, 10 February 1926, column 460.

particular sections, the temperance lobby kept up the pressure outside Parliament. At a ‘mass meeting’ at City Hall, which was led by the Archbishop of Cape Town, speakers celebrated the withdrawal of ‘two-thirds’ of the offending articles from the Bill, notably on the composition of the licensing boards and the sale of liquor through cafés and restaurants.

By contrast, it is somewhat puzzling that the KWV failed to articulate a public case in favour of wine and spirits. In Parliament, Heatlie and J. H. H. De Waal made lengthy contributions to the debate, but given the latter’s hostility to the KWV, it is perhaps understandable that they struggled to find a unified voice. The one specific item on which these MPs mounted a defence was in relation to the dop system.¹³¹ However, this was more about justifying established practice in the Cape than supporting an extension to the north. While Blackwell wished to exclude all Black people from the dop, Heatlie insisted that it was impractical to separate Coloured and Black farmworkers in this way. He also asserted that the dop was conducive to law and order because it kept farmworkers away from the canteens.¹³² For defenders of the dop, the cardinal principle remained that the farmer was the best judge of the welfare of his workers. As Jeremy Martens has indicated, the debate also elicited fundamental differences of opinion as to whether the Coloured population should be treated on a par with the White one.¹³³ While some defended the rights of Coloured people to consume on the basis of non-racialism,¹³⁴ those who represented wine interests were conscious of the fact that they were the principal consumers of unfortified wine. At the same time, the abandonment of the right of Black voters in the Cape to drink was a further nail in the coffin of a shared citizenship.¹³⁵ Temperance campaigners, who had formally supported the political rights of Black people in line with the traditions of Cape liberalism, had contributed to this outcome by abandoning equality before the law in the pursuit of eventual prohibition.

In 1928, the temperance movement had chalked up a significant victory over the wine farmers and the merchants alike, and in ways that were to have profound consequences for the next three decades.¹³⁶ Under the 1928 Liquor Act, all Black people were henceforth excluded from the purchase of wine, bottled beer and

¹³¹ One MP shrewdly observed that many MPs who were vocally opposed to the dop system had previously voted against Local Option. Gilson, *Assembly Debates*, 2 May 1928, column 3595.

¹³² Charlie Heatlie, MP for Worcester, *Assembly Debates*, 2 May 1928, column 3590.

¹³³ Jeremy Creighton Martens, “Conflicting views of ‘Coloured’ people in the South African Liquor Bill debate of 1928”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 35 (2) 2001, pp. 313–338.

¹³⁴ Maj. G. B. Van Zyl referred to a petition signed by 10,344 Coloured people, many of whom were temperance supporters, objecting to any distinction on the basis of colour. Van Zyl, *Assembly Debates*, 20 February 1928, columns 1181–1182.

¹³⁵ Black voters in the Cape, whose rights had rested on a qualified franchise, were removed from the common roll in 1936.

¹³⁶ Muriel Jones, “Roos Liquor Bill”, *White Ribbon* XXXVIII, no. 9, June 1928; CA A1696 “Women’s Christian Temperance Union”.

spirits, which represented a significant reversal of the position in the Cape where those who qualified to vote had previously been exempted, even if permits of exemption could still be applied for in exceptional circumstances.¹³⁷ And yet, for temperance campaigners, there were three lingering sources of discontent. The first is that they had failed to prevent the legalization of municipal beer halls selling a version of 'kaffir beer' on the Witwatersrand. Secondly, the dop system remained in place in the Cape and the Orange Free State, albeit subject to formal regulation. Thirdly, Coloured people in the Cape and Natal (and Asians) were still permitted to purchase alcohol from canteens and off-licences. However, the Act provided that all canteens would close within three years, except for those that were converted into hotel licences, which was likely to reduce Coloured people's access to alcohol before very long. Also, they had failed to entrench their preferred version of Local Option. But the hours of sale were reduced, and while the wine farmer's licence survived, it was restricted to larger volumes consumed off-premises. On balance, it was evident that Blackwell and the temperance lobby had forced Roos into a humiliating retreat through a skilful mixture of public campaigning and the application of pressure to individual MPs. As one Parliamentarian later described the outcome: 'The Bill which Mr Roos introduced . . . at that time was introduced as a Liquor Bill, but it left the House as a Prohibition Act. It was introduced as a Roos Bill and went out as a Blackwell Act.'¹³⁸ The wine farmers had avoided an even worse fate, perhaps, but the provisions that were intended to expand the market for light wines had been stripped out. What this meant was that the internal market for wine was even more precariously balanced on the consumption of White and Cape Coloured people, whose capacity to drink would also be inhibited by stricter licensing laws. The 1928 legislation was equally a defeat for the merchants who avoided a curb on 'tied houses' but faced greater constraints on their ability to sell wine and spirits.

Conclusion

Across the wine-producing world, as Perold rightly observed, there was a steep increase in production around the turn of the century that was not matched by a comparable rise in demand.¹³⁹ Unlike in France, a generic problem was compounded by South African legislation that was designed to prevent a majority of the population from acquiring access to alcohol, including wine

¹³⁷ The exemptions covered a period of 12 months. Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws for the Control of the Supply of Intoxicating Liquor (Liquor Act) (No. 30 of 1928), section 101 (3).

¹³⁸ A. J. Stals, *Assembly Debates*, 9 February 1933, column 511.

¹³⁹ See Kym Anderson and Vicente Pinilla, "Global overview" in Anderson and Pinilla (eds.), *Wine Globalization*, table 2.1, p. 27.

and brandy. The 1928 Liquor Act marked both the demise of a lengthy campaign to establish an exception for 'light wine' and victory for the temperance lobby over the wine farmers and merchants alike. It was not a total victory because White and Cape Coloured drinkers could still purchase wine. But it narrowed consumption at a time when production was surging as a consequence of the opening up of the Breede River valley to irrigated farming. The government was reluctant to intervene directly, and so it fell to the KWV to address an oversupply of basic wine destined for distillation. In the next chapter, I assess how far the KWV proved capable of fulfilling its devolved mandate after 1924, and the door to the advancement of a quality agenda remained open.